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CHINESE LETTERS.

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Tranſlated firſt from the Originals into French *by the Marquis* D'ARGENS, *and now into* Engliſh.

Printed for D. Browne at the Black Swan without Temple-Bar, and R. Hett at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry.

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CHINESE LETTERS.

BEING A

Philosophical, Historical, and Critical

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

A CHINESE Traveller at PARIS,

And his Countrymen in

CHINA, MUSCOVY, PERSIA and JAPAN.

Translated from the Originals into *French*,
By the Marquis *D' ARGENS*, Author of the
LETTRES JUIVES, or JEWISH SPY;
And now done into *ENGLISH*.

LONDON:

Printed for D. BROWNE, at the *Black Swan* without *Temple-Bar*; and R. HETT, at the *Bible* and *Crown* in the *Poultry*. MDCCXLI.

CHINESE LETTERS.

BEING A

CORRESPONDENCE

Tr. h.
A 68

TO THE

Late KING of *CORSICA*,

Of *Woful* Memory.

May it please your defunct Majesty,

GRATITUDE, and the Love of Truth, are two Virtues of very great Importance to all Persons who desire to make any Progress in the Study of true Philosophy. I am now called upon by both those Virtues to offer You this Volume of the *Chinese* Letters, with a Preference to all other Persons to whom I might have dedicated it. I don't forget how You contributed to the Success of my *Jewish Letters*, nor

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the good Reception which the Publick gave to the Epiſtolary Addreſs that I made to you at the Head of the Second Volume. So much for the Article of Gratitude; and now for that of the Love of Truth. Almoſt all the News-Writers in *England* cry'd you up for three or four Years together; and they did their Part to advance you to the Rank of the ALEXANDERS and the CÆSARS, their *Gazettes* being always ſtuffed with your Proweſs. But I can't imagine what made them tell ſo many Lies, much leſs what engaged them to talk ſo long in the ſame Language; for to be plain with you, your Behaviour has fallen very ſhort of what your Adherents gave us Hopes of. Since the Arrival of the *French* in *Corſica*, you have prudently left it to the Inhabitants to defend their own Iſland, and thought it enough to procure them ſome ſmall Aſſiſtance, without ever judging it fit to hazard your Perſon. The laſt Time you arrived in your Kingdom, you imitated the PRETENDER, and play'd very near the ſame Part as he

did

did in *Scotland*. Such Precautions are indeed very conducive to your long Life, but improper for the forming of Conquerors. I could have been glad if you had imitated the Example of *Charles* XII. or if you pleaſe, a greater than his, that of *Henry* IV. Thoſe Princes were ſeveral times in Situations as melancholy and perplexing as yours; but their Valour and Intrepidity furniſh'd them with thoſe Reſources of which your great Foreſight deprived you. You will ſay, perhaps, that 'tis a dear Purchaſe of a Kingdom to pay for it by a thouſand Hazards of Life. Such a Stile would come very well from the Mouth of an Epicurean Philoſopher; but I think it ſounds prepoſterouſly from the Lips of an illuſtrious Fortune-hunter, a Chief of Rebels, and a Man who challenged all the Senate of *Genoa* to Battle. Remember with what Haughtineſs you inſulted thoſe courteous Senators, who take care to have engraved upon their Arms, *Thou ſhalt do no Murder*, that it may be a conſtant Memento to caution them

againſt making an ill uſe of them. Is there not Room to think that you were ſo ſawcy only becauſe you knew very well that not a Man of thoſe you inſulted would accept your Challenge? And is it not to be ſuppoſed that when all is ſaid and done, you have as much Abhorrence as *Sancho Pancha* had for all Quarrels which are decided by any other Weapon but the Fiſt? To this you will anſwer, that you proved your Valour before the Arrival of the *French* upon ſeveral Occaſions. Many People will make Anſwer, that you had twenty *Corſican* Soldiers againſt one *Genoeſe*; ſurely there wanted no great Matter of Courage to beat an Enemy ſo much your Inferior. As ſoon as there came to be an Equality you retir'd; Fortune has puniſh'd you for your Cowardiſe, and you have nothing left of your paſt Grandeur but the ſad Remembrance of it. Indeed if, as you have imitated the PRETENDER, you had the ſame Reſource as he; if you could find a Sanctuary at *Rome*, and be there drawn about for the Air by a Pair of white Horſes, with wall Eyes, rueful Looks,

Looks, and fallen Creſts, to denote your former Grandeur, your Condition would not be ſo doleful; but I don't believe that the Court of *Rome* will ever be ſo good as to give you wherewithal to pay for a Pair of Horſes, it being very ſorry to contribute to the keeping the PRETENDER's Cattle, whoſe Ribs, ready to ſtart through their Flanks, ſhew that they keep Faſt on the Vigils, and all the holy Seaſon of Lent, and that their Maſter is a good Catholick.

As to the *Corſicans*, you will find no *Jacobites* among them. Your Fate ſeems in my Opinion ſo much to be pitied, that you have ſcarce the Remedy left of commencing Author. At leaſt if you have Recourſe to this Expedient, I tell you beforehand that you will have almoſt as many Quarrels with your new Brethren as you have had with the *Genoeſe*. Above all, don't lay any Streſs upon the Praiſes of thoſe who extoll'd you to the Skies when you were in your Glory; for they hoped then that the Praiſes they beſtowed upon you would have turned to their Advantage.

They commended you in ſhort to promote the Vent of their Works; but now they would, for the ſame Reaſon, find fault with you, as you may gueſs from what has been lately ſaid by a certain Writer of *Cologne*, who after having made you the Author, in Imagination, of the fineſt Deeds that ever were done, has metamorphoſed you all on a ſudden into a bad Hiſtorian. As for my Part, I am, and always ſhall be, the ſame to you; and you ſee, that of all the Revolutions which have happen'd in your Fortune, none has ever alter'd my Opinion.

I am

Your deceaſed Majeſty's

Moſt humble, &c.

M. D***.

PREFACE,

By the Marquis D***.

THAT *I have ſuppoſed the* Chineſe *Writers of theſe Letters to be very well inſtructed in the Learning of the* Europeans, *is not ſhocking to Probability*; *for I admit them to have had a long Intimacy with the Miſſionary Jeſuits, and I know that they have cultivated an Aquaintance with ſeveral* Engliſh *Merchants at* Pekin, *by whoſe Means they have read the beſt* European *Books for above ten Years paſt. If it be not thought extraordinary that in certain Pieces even the Dead are ſometimes introduced as Speakers, can there be any Harm in ſuppoſing certain* Chineſe, *in fictitious Letters, to be perhaps a little more learned than they are in Reality?*

And tho' I have repreſented almoſt all my Chineſe *Correſpondents as very ſtaunch Deiſts*;

yet I don't pretend to decide the notable Dispute which has subsisted for so long a Time, between several learned Europeans, *whether the Men of Learning incline rather to Atheism than Deism. I have introduced both Sects because they have furnished me with Matter more copious and of greater Variety. I might, without Scruple, suppose a* Chinese *to have very just Notions of the Divine Being; for, according to the great and celebrated* Leibnitz, "*It* * *may* "*at first admit of a Doubt, whether the* Chi- "nese *do, or ever did, acknowledge Spiritual* "*Substances; but, upon mature Consideration,* "*I am inclined to believe the Affirmative, tho'* "*they have not perhaps acknowledged those* "*Substances as separate, and altogether exclu-* "*sive of Matter. There would be no Harm* "*in this, with regard to created Spirits;* "*for I am myself inclined to think that An-* "*gels have Bodies, which was also the Opi-* "*nion of several ancient Fathers of the Church.* "*I believe also that the rational Soul is never* "*intirely destitute of Body; but with regard* "*to God, 'tis possible that some* Chinese *may* "*have entertained an Opinion that he has also* "*a Body; that they considered God as the* "*Soul of the World, and joined him to Matter,* "*as did the ancient Philosophers of* Greece *and*

* *Leibnitz*'s Letters. Tome ii. p. 415.

"Asia.

" Asia. *Nevertheless, by shewing that the* " *most ancient Authors of* China *ascribe to the* " LI, *or first Principle, the very Produc-* " *tion of* KI, *or of Matter, there's no Occa-* " *sion to censure them; there needs nothing* " *more than to explain them. It will be more* " *easy to convince their Disciples that God is a* " *supramundane Intelligence, and above Mat-* " *ter. Therefore, in order to form a Judg-* " *ment whether the* Chinese *own spiritual* " *Substances, their* LI *ought especially to be* " *considered, or the Rule which is the first A-* " *gent and the Cause of other things, and which* " *I think answers to our Divinity. Now 'tis* " *impossible to understand this of a thing merely* " *passive, brutal and indifferent to every thing,* " *and by Consequence without Rule, as Mat-* " *ter is.*

I might oppose this first Rate Man in Learning with the Opinion of a Brother of his, a thorough-pac'd Atheist, since 'tis certain that several Chinese *of Learning pretend to be the same, and that the Number of them is so considerable, that M.* de la Croze * *asserts,* that their learned

* 'Tis certain that the *Chinese* Philosophers are of the same Sentiment as the ancient *Ægyptians* were, from whom I am very sure that they derived almost all their Opinions many Ages ago. Thus *Teone* the *Ægyptian*, the Daughter of *Proteus*, was derived from the *Helena* of *Euripides*.

ὁ νοῦς

learned Men were Atheists; that, like the ancient *Ægyptians*, they admitted of a blind Power diffused throughout the Universe, which quickened and governed it, and that their LI was only the *Chaos*, or first Matter.

My Enemies have, in one Sense, deprived me of the Privilege of thanking the Publick for the favourable Reception which they have hitherto vouchsafed to give to my Works. If I thank them for it, 'tis a Mark of my Pride, and I only make a Parade of my Gratitude to trumpet my own Praise. *What Answer can I make to this? If I undertake to justify myself, that's another Instance of my Vanity; for if I would be humble and modest in the Sense which these Gentlemen mean, I must suffer my-*

ὁ κῶς
Των κατθανὸτων ζημέν ἔ γνώμην ἔχες
Ἀθάναλον, εἰς ἀθαναλον ἐιθὲς αμπεσάν.

Where I have no Doubt as to the Sense of the Word γνώμη, which if it proves any thing, induces Pantheism, and not Deism. For the *Chinese*, *Confucius* not excepted, attribute to the material Heaven a blind Force knowing nothing, which is obedient to the Laws of Nature, and a certain Fate blind in like Manner. And that LI, which *Leibnitz* would have to pass for an eternal Rule, or the highest Reason, contrary to the Opinion of all the *Chinese*, is nothing more nor less than the *Chaos*, or first Matter, the Principle of all things, as *Longobardus* demonstrates from the clearest Examples and Authorities. *Extracts from* la Croze's *Epist. to* Sebast. Kortholt. p. 497.

self

ſelf to be groſly abuſed, and to be criticiſed right or wrong, without ſhewing the leaſt Sign that I feel it. This will appear a very difficult Matter to a great many People, and for ſome time I thought it impoſſible; nevertheleſs I have attain'd to that Pitch of Stoicism; *and as for ſuch who are pleaſed to do me the Honour to think me a Subject worthy their Criticiſms, I give them all the Scope and Liberty in the World.*

I have computed the Pamphlets that have been wrote againſt me for a Year paſt, and they are no leſs than two and thirty, which is a Circumſtance I ought to be proud of, if I was that vain Creature mine Enemies ſay I am. 'Tis unlucky for me that all theſe little Satires die as ſoon as they peep out of the Preſs, which is a very ſad Affair; and I am vaſtly ſorry that the Criticiſms upon my Works periſh ſo ſoon. Notwithſtanding my egregious Vanity, I am not without Fear that hitherto none but paltry Scribblers have thought fit to attack me, and that the truly learned have ſuch a hearty Contempt of me, that they are not willing to loſe any Time in expoſing my Faults. I ſhould have been fully confirmed in this Opinion, had not a Pamphlet appeared ſome time ago, with the Title of the New Cenſor, *which was intended to be publiſhed every Month, and therefore what Pity 'tis it ſaw but one? Really this is a ſtrange World we live in, which does*

not

not do Juſtice to good things, but by its Contempt diſcourages the greateſt Geniuſes; elſe how came that learned and eloquent Pamphlet to be deſpiſed, which tho' written by one Perſon only, might be look'd upon as the Work of ſeveral who clubb'd their Thoughts and Reflections, which the principal Author only put together. This learned Writer is a Refugee Abbé*, *Muſt he not be a Man of great Merit, ſince the ableſt Divines, Philoſophers and Criticks have made him their Interpreter? And he has ſerved them as well.*

Of all the terrible Reproaches the New Cenſor *has caſt upon me, the greateſt, and that which takes up above half of his Paper, is for my having banter'd mercenary Authors, tho' (if you will believe him) I was obliged to compoſe my* Lettres Juives *purely for Bread; but the* Abbé *will give me leave to ſhew him his Miſtake. Indeed for the firſt three Months that I ſpent in Holland, I was in a very melancholy Situation; but when I thought it proper to let my Brother know what Place I was retired to, I might take up my Pen, or lay it down when I pleaſed. I am very glad of this Opportunity of paying a publick Teſtimony to the Love and Generoſity of this Brother, which is rarely to be match'd. Moreover, as* M. l'Abbé

* Several Perſons will have it that he was a Monk; but he denies it, and in Charity we ſhould believe him.

l'Abbé *is at the* Hague, *he may ask* M. Deputre, *the King of* Sardinia's *Banker and Agent, if he had not Orders from his Correspondents at* Marseilles *to let me have what Money I wanted. I had scarce done half of the second Volume of the* Lettres Juives, *when going from the* Hague *to another Town, that same Banker furnish'd me with a hundred Pistoles. It troubles me that I am forced to demolish all the fine Reflections of this* New Censor; *but his Informers ought to have given him better Memoirs. And, with Leave of the Publick, I will add, that I defy all the Booksellers in* Holland *to charge me with the least Misconduct towards them. Several of them have had my Works, and not one can say that I have not acted with all the Frankness and Candour in the World. How many Authors are there that can say this? I leave it to the Booksellers themselves to declare it. After all, I don't think it any more disparaging to an Author to receive a modest Salary for his Works, than for an Advocate to take a Fee for his Pleadings, a Physician for his Visits, a Chamber Counsel for his Opinions, and a President for his Decrees. Those Authors are Mercenary, who working merely for Bread, and being Slaves to their Employers, are nothing more than Machines equipp'd with a Pen, which is exercised just as a Bookseller puts the Springs in Motion.*

Enough

Enough has been said upon this Head, and even more than I think is necessary to undeceive the New Censor. *As his Work is in a manner unknown and quite extinct, I might have excused myself from answering it; but as the Persons who employ'd him might perhaps be inclined to make use of him a second time; and as they can afford to pay for the Impression of Books which don't sell, 'tis not impossible that there might be a time when they may be at the Expence of some new Pamphlet, tho' they were to print but one every half Year. If they should, 'tis proper they should be more exact and better informed, than to reproach me with imaginary Faults, and such as I never was guilty of. Above all, I think that People who pretend to be so polite as they do, should take care not to make use of injurious Terms which savour of the College Pedant.*

PRE-

PREFACE

By the BOOKSELLERS.

THE Reception which the Publick has given to the Lettres Juives tranſlated into Engliſh with the Title of the Jewiſh Spy, is a ſtrong Argument in their Favour, it being very uncommon, if not impoſſible, for a Work to have ſo univerſal an Approbation without ſome Merit; and indeed to pretend the contrary, would be to arraign the Taſte of all thoſe Readers who have honoured it with their Applauſe.

The good Succeſs of that Work has encouraged us to publiſh another, written by the ſame Author, and in the ſame Taſte, which we hardly doubt of being as well reliſh'd as the former, ſince the Author's Reputation ſeems already to beſpeak its Acceptance. As he has had the good Luck to pleaſe hitherto, 'tis not to be ſuppoſed he has been ſo negligent as to give his Enemies the Pleaſure of ſaying, that the Chineſe Letters have been the Wreck of his Reputation. Beſides when a Man has happy Talents, it will be eaſily confeſs'd that he improves them to a great Degree of Perfection, while he cultivates them

them by that Exercise and Application which are necessary to Study, and that his latter Performances must needs therefore be the more perfect. Let it not be imagined that he has exhausted his Fancy in the Lettres Juives, *&c. and that he has been obliged to plunder* those *to make good* these. *There's no Danger of such a Self-Robbery; for the Humours of Mankind are so infinitely various, that they supply infinite Matter for Philosophical Reflections. 'Tis a Subject that cannot be exhausted, the Heart of Man having Depths and Recesses which are only known to those who have apply'd themselves to search and trace them minutely. Moreover, here we have a new Scene; we see a Comparison drawn between the Manners of several* European *Nations and those of the* Chinese; *a People so singular in every thing, that it has given Occasion for abundance of new Reflections, which cannot fail to edify, as well as entertain. Care has likewise been taken to bring these* Chinese *Travellers into several Parts of* Europe, *which our* Israelitish *Correspondents had not an Opportunity of visiting. To conclude, every body knows that* China *is a Country where the Sciences are carefully cultivated, and that the* Jesuits *have made it the* Theatre *of their* Missions, *which alone would furnish Materials sufficient for several great Volumes.*

CHINESE

CHINESE LETTERS.

LETTER I.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin *in* China.

DEAR *Yn-Che-Chan*, the *French* Language, which has cost me so many Years Study to acquire, will now be of Use to me. I am going to put the Instructions of our *European* Friends in Practice, and shall soon be able to know what Truth there is in what they have told us of the Manners of the *French*; and whether the Books, which the Missionaries brought us to read, may be credited.

Tho' 'tis now but two Days since I arrived at *Paris*, thou can'st hardly imagine what a Number of Ideas I have entertain'd in so short a Time, so many Conceptions of which I never had the least Notion, that before I can give thee a tolerable Account of any of those things, with which I have been most astonish'd, thou must give me time to recover from my first Surprize, and then I may be qualified to enter into a Detail of Particulars, thou must not expect in this first Letter; which I would have my dear *Yn-Che-Chan* consider in no other Light, than as the Expressions of a Man who is dazzled and bewilder'd by the Confusion of Objects. A *Siamese*, when he first comes to *Paris*, may be compared to those weak-ey'd Patients, who can't bear to see Broad-day, but are oblig'd to take in the Light of the Sun by degrees.

The *French*, by what I have seen of them as yet, seem to me to be as self-conceited as the *Japonese*, as fickle as the *Tartars*, and as brisk as the *Siamese*. If I had not understood their Language before I came into their Country, I should have been even more surprized than I am, at their Manners and Customs. Thou can'st not conceive how odd they appeared to me.

I landed at a Port called *Havre de Grace*. I had scarce got out of the Ship, but two Men came and accosted me, with a Smile, saying, *This Gentleman is a Foreigner to be sure.* I came from *Pekin*, *said I.* The Gentleman is a *Chinese*, *said they.* Without doubt, he has brought over many Curiosities with him. May we make bold to ask you, how long you have been in your Voyage --- whether you have been in any great Danger --- and whether you don't think the Change of the Climates extraordinary?

Being

Being surprized, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, at so many troublesome Questions, and astonished at so much Curiosity in Men, whom I had never seen in all my Life, I was very desirous to mortify them for their Pertness. If I had been at *China* I would have made them perfectly ashamed of their ridiculous Behaviour; but, as I was a Stranger, I only said to them, "Gentlemen, I am heartily sorry that I "can't answer your Questions; but I am so fa- "tigu'd with my Voyage, that you'll be so good as "to excuse me. With your Leave, I'll go and seek "a Lodging, that I may take a little Rest.." No sooner were the Words out of my Mouth, than a tall Man, that was on the Shore but a little Distance from me, said, *Come along with me, Sir, you shall be very welcome. I commonly lodge all Gentlemen that come to this Place; and 'tis not many Days ago, that two Dukes, five* German *Barons, and three other Lords quartered in my House.* After he had said this, without waiting for my Answer, he ordered the Seamen that carried my Baggage to follow him, and tho' I did not much chuse it, I prevail'd on myself to go to his House. No sooner was I entered, but the Hostess, the Children, and even the very Servants, began to teaze me with Questions. Such was their Curiosity, that the one had not Patience to stay till the other had an Answer; for they talk'd all together, and made a Noise like the Uproar of a mutinous Rabble. If I had not known what they said, I should have been deadly afraid: For a *Chinese*, who had been ignorant of any Language but his own, would, I dare say, have believ'd, that they all intended to use him ill, if not to rob him.

Mean while it being reported in the Neighbourhood, that a *Chinese* was arrived, the People flock'd from all Parts to stare at me, and they survey'd me

with as much Curiosity, as if they had been viewing one of those uncommon Animals, or tame Tygers, that the Fortune-Tellers carry about at *Pekin*. Several were surprized, to find me like other Men; and I heard 'em say, --- *This is very odd*, he *is made almost like a* Frenchman, *who would have thought it?* Others gave their Verdicts upon my Habit; one contemned my Robe, because it hid my Shape; another did not approve of my Bonnet; and another did not relish my Slippers. For two or three Hours almost the whole Town had nothing to talk of but me.

At last, the Curiosity of the Public being satisfied, all the Gazers went about their Business, and left me alone with the People of the House. I then called for something to eat; and while it was preparing, my Hostess said to me, Dear Sir, *do you believe in the Pope in your Country?* No, said I, we are of a Religion different from his; yet we live very sociably with those who are of his Faith, and I am very intimate with several *European* Missionaries. 'Oh, my God! *reply'd the Woman*, you surprize 'me. How can it be, that *Hugonots* and *Jansenists* should be such honest Men in your Country? For here were they to have all the World 'they would not live with the Pope's Friends. Our 'Parish Priest says, that the Corn should be spoil'd, 'and all the Apples rot off the Trees, before he 'would put off his Hat to the Father Rector of 'the *Jesuits*.' "We, said I, are neither *Hugonots* "nor *Jansenists*, who are both of them as indifferent to us, as those that are most attach'd to the "Pope. At *China*, we don't distinguish *Europeans* "by their Religion, but by their Country; and if "you were to talk upon this Subject to the *Chinese*, "three Fourths of them would not know what

"you

" you mean. As for my part, I understand you " by reason of the Intimacy I had with the *Je-* " *suits* and other *French* Missionaries, who, before " I left *China*, gave me an Idea of their Country, " and of the Divisions upon certain Doctrines of " Religion; but, pray let me have Supper, for " I must set out To-morrow for *Paris*, and I " want Rest." Sir, said the Woman, 'tis this Instant ready for you, and Care has been taken to secure your Passage, so that you may depart to-morrow at what Hour you please.

The Hostess was as good as her Word, and I actually set out at Break of Day. Nothing remarkable happened in my Journey; and as I was entering *Paris*, who should I meet with at the Bars but the very *French* Merchant to whom I was recommended, who had the Precaution to come and meet me, or else, I verily believe, I should not have known which way to turn, nor what to do, at my Entrance into such a City as *Paris*, I was so stunn'd at my first coming, with the Noise I heard, and with the Confusion I saw in this City.

Believe me, the most populous Fair at *Pekin*, is but a Desart compared to *Paris*. There are so many Coaches, that they actually stop one another in the Streets; and they that are oblig'd to foot it, are fain to creep between the Wheels of all these Carriages in Danger of being crush'd to death; so that one would take them for so many Birds in a thick Wood, striving to make their way out between the Branches.

There is a Difference between these Coaches, which is something odd and singular. You shall see one that is gilded, and lined with a sumptuous Velvet, and hard by it another quite out of Repair, with Boards instead of Glass Windows; and the Horses of this miserable Vehicle, which the *French* call a

Fiacre (*i. e.* a Hackney-Coach) are exactly answerable to the Carriage, the one, being white and blind of one Eye, the other, black and lame. To see this Multitude of Equipages so different, confounded with one another, and the best sometimes stopp'd in the Streets by the very worst, puts a Philosopher in mind how oddly and indiscriminately Grandeur and Wealth, Poverty and Misery, are distributed to this World's Inhabitants. Sometimes the Man, who seems to be the weakest and the vilest, puts a sudden Stop to the Affairs of a whole Kingdom. Great Men, as well as Little Ones, are in the same Predicament, and one single Event throws them into the same Perplexity. When a Madman, of the vilest Extraction in Life, assassinated the best King that ever sate on the Throne of *France*, it was a manifest Proof of the Power which Fortune sometimes gives to the most abject of Creatures to bring about the greatest Events.

So much, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, for moralizing: I now return to the surprizing Number of Coaches. What one observes within them, is altogether as odd and singular, as the Difference of their Gaiety. In a splendid Chariot, one sees a Duchess cover'd with Gold and Diamonds, but ugly, old, and with a Face like a shapeless Lump of Dough, and white Lead painted in several Patches with Vermillion. Just by this Vehicle, which carries this noble Monster, there rides in a Hackney Coach a beautiful Lass, of mean Extraction, dress'd in a plain Woollen Stuff, with no more Ornaments than what she is beholding for to Nature, and close by her a Prentice-boy, who tenderly squeezes her Hand, and robs her of a Kiss. Not far off an old Magistrate in his Berlin is reading some Petition, which will be the Ruin of two or three Families. A young Spark, who is here called a *Petit-Maitre*, (or Fop)

raves

raves and ſwears in his Calaſh at the Man who preſumes to ſtop a Perſon of his Quality. He cries out inceſſantly to his Coachman, *Drive on, drive on, you Raſcal*; but he may bawl his Throat out, for a jolly ruby-fac'd Prelate, lolling at Eaſe in his Coach, hinders his Progreſs. He too fumes at the little Reſpect which is paid to his ſacred Character; but 'tis in vain, for he muſt ſtay till the Coachman, by whom the Stop was occaſioned, puts an End to it. This, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is the very Picture of Human Life. I ſhall always endeavour to make my minuteſt Obſervations turn to Advantage.

Farewel.

LETTER II.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin *in* China.

I BEGIN, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, to have ſome Notion of the Manners and Cuſtoms of the *French*; but as to their Women, I am not yet able to form any juſt Idea of their Shape and Phyſiognomy. Not that they are hid in Veils, like all the *Aſiatics*, or that they are ſhut up in their Apartments, like the *Chineſe* Women; on the contrary, they traverſe all the Streets of the City, and the publick Walks are full of 'em. Nevertheleſs 'tis impoſſible to judge, whether they are really ſuch as

they seem to be. Their Faces are generally borrowed, and they make them in the Morning before they go abroad. They put on a Mask, which looks very handsome with White, Red, Blue, and Black: The two last Colours serve to paint the Veins and Eyebrows; the Black is also made use of to change the Hair. The same Woman that you saw Fair one Day, next Day will be a smart Brown; for the Figure which a *French* Lady is to make all Day, is determined by her Fancy, by her Looking-Glass, and by the Advice of her Chamber-Maid.

As to the Shape and Stature of the Women of this Country, 'tis altogether as counterfeit and uncertain as the Features of their Faces. By the Help of two little Stilts, to which they give the Name of *Shoes*, *Clogs*, and *Pattins*, a Woman makes herself taller by a Foot or two, if she thinks fit, without its being perceived how she does it, because her Petticoats and Gowns conceal the enormous Size of her Heels from the public View.

Formerly, as I have been told, the *French* Women, thinking their Feet did not contribute enough to their Stature, raised themselves higher by means of their Head-Dress; for they wore upon their Heads a little Pyramid of Linnen, edg'd with Lace, and nicely supported by Wire; when it often happened, that a Woman, who was really but three Feet from Heel to Head, appeared as tall as a Giant. But this Fashion did not last long for two Reasons; the first was, that the tall Women thought it very much to their Disadvantage; the second was, that the Head-Dress was often longer and higher than the Woman who wore it; and it might justly be said, That most of the *French* Women were Walking Pillars of Linnen.

As the Stature of the Women cannot be truly known in this Country, so the other Defects of their

their Shape are ſtill more concealed. A Hump on the Back, be it ever ſo great, is not ſeen, by Reaſon of a very wide Pair of Stays, which keeps off of her Shoulders a looſe Robe de Chambre, that flys over a monſtrous Hoop, which hinders it from touching the Feet, and makes it fall ſloping above two Foot from the Heels.

Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, thou haſt no Notion of theſe Hoops; which, of all Faſhions, is the moſt fooliſh and ridiculous. Imagine a large Tub, fifteen or ſixteen Ells in Circumference, the Hoops of which are made of Whale-bone, and the Body commonly of a coarſe Stuff, call'd Canvaſs. A Woman girds this about her Waiſt, and then ſhe looks like one of our Preachers ſhut up in a Pulpit, from whence he gives out his Sermon. Nothing is ſo odd, as to ſee her waddling in the Streets, ſwinging her Hoop with a grave, or with a friſky Air, juſt as ſhe happens to be in a Temper, either gay or melancholy. When ſhe is in a Coach ſhe quite fills it with her Hoop, which ſhe manages ſo artfully, that the two Ends juſt hang over the Doors; when you wou'd ſwear, that a Woman is like a Buſt, ſet upon Planks, covered with a rich Carpet, and, methinks, I ſee the Image of ſome Deity carried in a Chariot.

When the Women alight out of the Coach, they are ſo embarraſs'd by their Hoop, which is too wide for ſo narrow a Paſſage, that they can't get it out without being obliged to ſhew their Legs: But to tell thee the real Truth, my Curioſity gave me no Pleaſure; for I ſcarce ſaw any Legs, but what were very ordinary, and ſuch Feet, as in *China* would have been frightful.

Thou knoweſt, that we look upon the Smallneſs of the Feet as one of the principal Graces of the Sex. As ſoon as a Daughter is born, we help to perfect Nature, and the Nurſes take Care to bind her

Feet very tight, to hinder them from growing. The *French* Women, on the contrary, suffer those Parts of the Body to grow, and don't make use of the same Methods that we do; tho', they own, that little Feet is one of the most essential Perfections of the Ladies; because when they are arrived at such an Age, they do all they can to repair the Blemish which they contracted when they were Children, and put their Feet to the Torture in very strait Shoes; but they are scarce ever the better for being so pinch'd, and the smallest Foot at *Paris* wou'd be thought monstrous at *Pekin*.

Some *French* Men have been so curious, as to ask me the Reasons why we so much admire the Women for their little Feet, which they condemn for a silly Taste. *What Madness is it*, say they, *to cripple the Sex, in order to make them look handsomer, and to give them an Ailment which they can never recover, together with a Pace that is slow, hobbling, and disagreeable to the Sight!* "I plainly "perceive, *said I to them*, that you are ignorant "that Politics and Reason govern our Taste, as "much as the Satisfaction of the Eye. You will "readily own, that nothing is so disagreeable as to "see a Woman have a great Foot, you can't bear "with such at *Paris*; why don't you try to per- "fect what you acknowledge to be defective? "Besides, how do you know, but the View of "the ancient *Chinese* was to render the Pace of "the Women slow and hobbling, in order to "oblige them to keep at home, and to impose "a Yoak upon them, to which they would be "the better reconciled, because 'tis founded on the "Acquisition of Beauty, which is so dear to the Fair "Sex? Thus, we see, that the *Chinese* Ladies suffer "this Uneasiness very willingly, and even add to it if "possible, for the sake of having little Feet. You

"will

" will own, that if a Fashion ought to be ap-
" prov'd and followed, 'tis when it tends to the
" Good of Society, and to keep Peace at home.
" Our Women don't walk with near so much Ease
" as the *French* Women, and wou'd not be able to
" run about all Day without extreme Pain. What's
" the Consequence of this? 'Tis that they seldom
" stir from their Apartment, which is in the inmost
" Part of the House; that there they stay with the
" Women who wait on them, amusing themselves
" with things that have some Relation or other to
" their Household; and that they are not diverted
" from their Duty by their Correspondence with
" those abroad. Supposing it were true, as it is
" not, that little Feet was a Defect in Women,
" yet all Husbands, in their Senses, ought to stand
" up for this Fashion, and to consider it as the firmest
" Basis of their Tranquility."

I had scarce finished what I had to say, but a *Frenchman* said to me, with a Smile, *If you knew the Temper of our Women, you wou'd not imagine that the making their Feet little wou'd oblige them to stay at home; for were they to be quite cut off, they would walk upon their Stumps; the very Notion of Confinement and Constraint, being so shocking to the Women of* Europe, *and especially of* France, *that they would rather die than live as your* Chinese *Women do.* " I pity you then, *said I*, since
" you are obliged to tolerate such an Irregularity;
" and am surpriz'd to see you so fond of marrying.
" For my part, were I a *Frenchman*, the Fear that
" would possess me of marrying a Woman, whom
" I should perhaps see but now and then by chance
" in a whole Day, wou'd hinder me from taking
" a Wife." *Ho, ho*, reply'd the *Frenchman*, *we think quite differently in this Country, and he is the happiest Husband commonly with us who sees*

his Wife ſeldomeſt. Three fourths of the Pariſians *would run mad, if they were obliged to ſtay two Days together with their Wives. In* France, *it would be eaſier to get a Law for a perpetual Celibacy, than to ſubmit to live ſuch a Life as you think ſo neceſſary for the Happineſs of a Husband. What ſay you then to your Wives in* China, *and what do they ſay to you, to prevent your being troubleſome to one another by tedious and frequent Converſation?* "They "ſhew us, *reply'd I*, by their Diſcourſe, their "Conduct, and their Actions, that they love us, "and nothing can give us a more ſenſible Pleaſure." *Ha, ha*, ſaid the *Frenchman*, with a ſcoffing Air, *you call one another my Heart, my Pretty Little Soul, my Love. Such Language is plaguy tender. But to us* Frenchmen, *it ſeems a little inſipid.*

A Stranger coming in, broke off the Converſation; and indeed, I could not bear to hear the falſe Maxims, which this *European* was ready to vent in his ironical Style. By what I have now told thee, thou may'ſt judge whether Marriages in *France* can make Men happy. I expect to hear ſpeedily from *Tiao* and *Choang*; the firſt of whom muſt be arriv'd by this time in *Muſcovy*, and the latter will, no doubt, be very ſoon at *Iſpahan*: Tell me, if *Kieou-Che* is ſet out for *Japan*, and deſire him to write to me.

Farewel.

LETTER

LETTER III.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

THE *French*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, are, in many things, like the *Chineſe*. They are in general, as well as the *Chineſe*, good-natur'd, ſociable, and humane. Their Behaviour is perfectly affable, without the leaſt Mixture of Harſhneſs, Moroſeneſs or Paſſion, and their Politeneſs is viſible in all their Actions. The Common People at *Paris*, are ſo far from being rude or clowniſh, that a Mechanic, when at Work, will leave his Shop to put a Stranger, who has loſt his Way, into the right Road, without demanding the leaſt Fee for his Trouble; in which Reſpect he is very unlike that *Dutch* Boor, who, I have been aſſur'd, demanded Money for telling what a-Clock it was.

A Man came in t'other Day to my Quarters, and with an unpolite Air, ask'd, *Whether this was the* Engliſh *Houſe?* "No, Sir, *reply'd my Land-lord*, 'tis in the next Street, I will do myſelf the "Honour to go with you to it." And ſo he did; but when he return'd, *You took Notice of that Man*, ſaid he to me, *whom I have been to conduct to his Inn. He is an* Engliſhman. *If I was in his Country, and ſhould deſire the ſame Favour of him, he would grin at me. And what is worſe, if he did*

not

not like my Physiognomy, and happen'd to perceive a Bag in my Poll, or any thing that savour'd too much of the French *Dress, he would throw Dirt upon my Clothes.* "I am amazed, *said I to this* Parisian, "that you did not treat this Man in the same Manner as he would treat you, since you have so "many Instances whereby you are assured what "you are to expect from such a rude Clown. --- "Why don't you pay him in his own Coin; or rather, why don't you make Reprisals to revenge "your Countrymen?" *Such Revenge*, reply'd the *Frenchman, would be unworthy of a generous Man; why should I affront a Man, who personally does me no harm? On the other hand, his being a Stranger in this Country, gives him a Title to Respect; and besides the Law of Nations, he ought also to enjoy that of Hospitality. 'Tis to the Civilities which are shewed here to Foreigners, that the* French *Nation is obliged for the Reputation which it has of knowing the* Decorums *of Life better than all others. Her Neighbours, as jealous as they are of her Grandeur and Power, agree in this Truth; and consequently the Kingdom is full of Foreigners, who come in Throngs to a Country, in which 'tis so agreeable to travel.*

Tho', Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, we have a different way of Thinking in *China*, from what they have in *France*, yet I cannot but approve of what was so wisely said by this *Frenchman*. For, in short, the Inclination which appears in *Pekin*, and in the other great Cities of our Empire, to put Tricks upon Travellers is, to my Mind, unworthy of, and contrary to the Character of Men, who pique themselves upon studying the Rules of sound Morality, and boast with so much Ostentation of practising the most refined Virtues. To speak candidly and frankly, give me leave to tell thee, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*,

Chan, that our Countrymen in general are more Knaves than Fools. They know how to keep their Tempers, to save Appearances, and can cover their Vices with so much Art, that they hide them from the public Inspection; but when once the Mask is taken off that disguises their pernicious Sentiments, one is astonished to see the greatest Crimes bear sovereign Sway in the Heart of a Man, who has generally the outward Appearance of a grave Philosopher.

The most shocking Circumstance, to my Mind, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, is, that we urge that Moderation which we value ourselves upon, as an Excuse for our Transgressions, and that we have Recourse to our phlegmatic Tempers to palliate the Shame which we ought to take to ourselves for our Dishonesty to Strangers. I remember, that one Day when I was in the Province of *Canton*, I could not help being angry at what a Countryman of ours said to an *English* Merchant, to whom he had sold a great many Bales of Silk. The *European*, before he put them on board his Ship, was resolved to examine them. The first that he opened, he found in a very good Condition; but when he came to inspect the others, he perceived that every Piece of the Silk was rotten. He smartly reproached the *Chinese* for his Knavery; but the latter, with a Gravity as surprizing as it was unseasonable, made him Answer, *I should have served you better, if your Rogue of an Interpreter had not assured me positively that you would not look into your Bales.*

I was present at another Scene, where a *Chinese* shew'd a Brazen-Face, not inferiour to that of this Trader of *Canton*. A Countryman, of a Village near *Pekin*, who came to that City one Market-Day with Provisions, sold a Ham to a *Dutchman*; who, to his great Surprize, when he went home, and boil'd it, perceived, after he had

put

put his Knife into it, that the Meat, of which he thought to make such a Meal, was but a Piece of Wood cover'd with a red-dish Clay instead of Flesh, artfully cased over with a Hog's Skin. As much vexed as he was, there was no Remedy for him but Patience. Going to Market a few Days after, he met with the same Countryman again, who offered to sell him some Capons. *Let us see first*, said he, *whether thy Capons are of the same Make as thy Hams.* The *Dutchman* examining the Capon that was put into his Hands, discovered that the Stomach of it had been open'd, all the Flesh drawn out of it, and some Tow stuffed in the Place of it. The Countryman did not blush, tho' he found his Knavery detected. "I am, *said he*, but a Blockhead, and you are "much more cunning than I am. For the future, "I will not try to impose upon the *Europeans*, for "I plainly see, that they are wiser than the *Chinese*."

We must own, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that this Phlegm which is pleaded in Abatement of the Shame that ought to be the Attendant of Vice, is more criminal than a Passion which is excusable, at the Sight of a flagrant Piece of Knavery. Gravity in Wickedness, is more blameable than Vivacity; since it appears, that, in the former Case, a Man acts with entire Liberty, and that the Soul enjoys all its Faculties; whereas, in the second, a Sort of masterless Rage makes us do those things in spite of ourselves, which we should be the first to blame, if our Reason preserv'd its Ascendant over us.

Altho' I condemn our Countrymen for committing Knavery with so much Gravity, I am very far from denying, that, in other Actions, they do well to keep entire Command of their Passions, and to check the Impetuosity of those Sallies, which they so much blame in the *Europeans*, and especially the

the *French*. I reckon, there's as much Difference between a Man who acts upon all Occasions with Weight and Measure, who never deviates from his ordinary Course of Life, and another who abandons himself to his Choler, his Vivacity and his Fury, as there is between a Man who is always sober, and a Madman who has long and lucid Intervals, but yet is liable to dangerous Fits of Distraction.

Don't therefore imagine, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that while I blame our Countrymen, I endeavour to excuse the Impertinence of three Fourths of the *French*. Were I but to go about it, I know that it would be all lost Labour, for they convinc'd thee, when thou hadst some Business with them at *Pekin*, of the Extravagance and Unseasonableness of their Vivacity. I remember, that one Day after a Conversation which thou hadst with a *French* Merchant, thou didst declare to me, *that a* Chinese *would not have Patience to hear in a Month what a* Frenchman *could say to him in an Hour*. What would'st thou think then of their Babble and Vivacity, if thou wa'st among them as I am? To be sure wa'st thou to be dinn'd with the continual Clack of different Voices, thou wouldst think thyself beset with a Swarm of Bees, to whom Heaven had granted a human Form; for the *French*, when they are in Company together, and especially the younger Sort, are not content to speak one after another, but are afraid they should not have time enough, and commonly talk all together, rather than stay to explain themselves, and to communicate each other's Ideas. It happens sometimes, that while two or three are speaking, two or three others whistle, and as many sing; nevertheless 'tis a Rule establish'd in *France*, for the sake of Politeness, that People should speak low, with Modesty, and

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at a time when the rest of the Company is silent; but in this Country, as far as I have been able to observe, there are in all Cases very good Laws and very sensible Rules, but such are very ill kept, and only made to shew, that the *French* know what is good and wise, but cannot observe it. You shall commonly hear People, who will preach up the Necessity of taking care that a too lively or too hot a Temper, don't get the upper Hand; that a Gentleman ought to be the Master of his Passions, that he ought carefully to shun that pert Vivacity and Activity, which aspires to do every thing, to say every thing, to perform every thing, and to over-rule every thing. The very same Persons who will make these fine Speches, shall run into the Faults which they themselves condemn, because they have not accustomed themselves betimes to resist their Impulses, and to tame the Fury of their Tempers.

Farewel, Dear YN-CHE-CHAN.

LETTER IV.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

DEAR *Yn-Che-Chan*, the Manners of the *French* is still the Subject of my careful Observation; to judge of which with the more Certainty, I compare them with the Customs of the *Chinese*, and by setting the Inclinations of the one in Opposition

tion to those of the other, I plainly discern wherein they agree, and wherein they differ.

In this Letter, I shall give thee a farther Account of the *French* Nation in general, of which I judge it necessary to have a just and distinct Idea, before we enter into a Detail of what relates to the several States, and other Particulars.

I inform'd thee, in my last Letter, that the *French* understand Good Manners, and that they have good Laws, but that they seldom practise the former, and scarce ever submit to the latter. Of this I perceive Instances every Day in the little Respect they pay to People in Years; tho' 'tis one of their fundamental Maxims, that nothing is so venerable as Old Age. A young Blockhead shall seat himself in publick Assemblies, at the Play-Houses, at Churches, *&c.* above a Man of three-score and ten, without shewing him the least Civility; and sometimes, if the old Man be of an inferiour Condition and Birth, he will despise him. Such a stupid Wretch, among the *Chinese*, would be looked upon as a Madman, whose Vanity had deprived him of his Reason. We are firmly persuaded, that if ever Civility, Good Nature, and Affability are proper, they are especially due to old Men, who ought to be considered as Persons, whom Age and Time have rendered the Depositaries of that Wisdom and Knowledge, in which the Generality of Mankind is deficient. With the *Chinese*, Birth, Riches, Honours and Dignities, are so far from dispensing with the Respect due to old Age, that the Sovereign himself thinks it a Glory and an Honour to reverence it, in the meanest of his Subjects. I remember, that a few Months before I left *Pekin*, a poor Mandarin, that was a hundred Years old, went to Court upon New Year's-Day, to pay his Duty to the Emperor, who, tho' it was

his

his Cuſtom to ſee no Company upon that Day, yet he ordered the venerable old Man to be admitted to his Preſence, advanc'd to meet him, hindered him from falling on his Knees to ſalute him, and ſaid to him very graciouſly, *You ſhall hereafter be welcome to ſee me, and ſpeak to me when you will. I excuſe you from all Ceremony. I will myſelf meet you half-way; 'tis an Honour due to your Age; and to give you even more ſubſtantial Proofs of my Eſteem for you, I make you Firſt Preſident of the Tribunal of the Mathematicks.* This old Man, as thou may'ſt imagine, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, bleſs'd his Stars, that he had liv'd to ſee this Day. On the contrary, 'tis very common in *France* to ſee honeſt, and wiſe Men too ſo oppreſs'd with Contempt and Diſregard, that they are ſorry they have lived ſo long, and wiſh that Death had ſhorten'd the Thread of their Misfortunes.

Among the *French*, Old Age is almoſt as bad as ſome contagious Diſtemper is among the *Chineſe*; every one ſhuns you, and flys from you --- They are ready to ſay to you, *What do you out of your Grave? What Buſineſs have you in this World? You only ſtand in other People's Way.* 'Tis very common to hear it ſaid of certain venerable old Men; *He is an old Dotard; the poor Man dreams.* Sure I am, that if a Citizen, as old as the Mandarin, to whom the Emperor ſhewed ſo much Reſpect and Friendſhip, was to come to the Gate of a *French* Nobleman, upon any Day of Grand Ceremony, he would go near to be rebuffed, and perhaps turn'd away as an impertinent Intruder. So much for this Article, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*; paſs we now to another.

I don't think, that *Frenchmen* are ſo much ſway'd by Intereſt, as the *Chineſe*. Thou knoweſt 'tis the Foible of our Nation, and that it makes a *Chineſe* act all Parts in Life. An *European* Author, who has

wrote

wrote a History of our Empire, reproaches the *Chineſe* with even affecting to appear diſintereſted for the ſake of their own Intereſt. I believe, he has too much Grounds for ſaying *, *If there's any thing to be got by it, they will make uſe of all their Craft. They artfully inſinuate themſelves into the Good-will of Perſons who are capable of favouring their Pretenſions, court their Friendſhip a long time by frequent Services, adapt themſelves to all Tempers, with a ſurprizing Complaiſance, and turn to their Advantage the leaſt Opportunities that are given them to attain to their Ends. Self-Intereſt is, as it were, the* Primum Mobile *of all their Actions; as ſoon as they have the leaſt Advantage in Proſpect, they grudge no Pains, nor Fatigue. In a word, 'tis this that puts them into a perpetual Motion, and that fills the Streets, Rivers, and great Roads with infinite Numbers of People always in Motion and Action.*

As for the *French*, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, it may be ſaid, that they are very near as reſtleſs as the *Chineſe*, and as much employ'd in their Commerce. To them may alſo be apply'd, whatever that Author ſays of our Countrymen, Politics excepted, of which the Commonalty know not ſo much as the firſt Principles. The *French* are too ſprightly to ſuffer any long Reſtraint; and tho' they are not inſenſible as to Gain, yet they could not have the Patience to ſpend *much Time in cultivating the Friendſhip of People by frequent Services, and to ſuit themſelves to all Tempers by an exceſſive Complaiſance.* This Sort of Servility is in a manner unknown in *France*; but I have been aſſur'd, that in *Italy*, and ſeveral other Countries in *Europe*, 'tis extended to a farther Degree than in *China*.

* Deſcription of *China* and *Chineſe Tartary*, by *Pere Halde*. Vol. II. p. 132.

Tho'

Tho' the *French* Tradesmen are incapable of entering upon such long-winded Methods to favour their Commerce, yet they are supply'd with others, from their own Tempers, and from that of their Nation. The Affability of the Seller, and the Curiosity of the Buyer, are in this Country the two chief Pillars of Commerce. 'Tis almost impossible for a *Frenchman* to pass by a Shop, and not be tempted to go in and see the new Fashions there are in it, which the Tradesman immediately exhibits to his View, and his Shop is open even for those to enter it who don't think of laying out any Money in it. --- From hence, it very often happens, that a Man who had no other Design than to see a Piece of Stuff, a Watch, a Sword, &c. cannot resist the Pleasure of making it his own; for Fashion bears as great a Sway over the *French*, as Jealousy does over the *Turks* and *Tartars*.

The *Parisians*, especially those whose Shops are in a great *Bazar* *, near the Tribunal of Justice †, have Recourse to a very singular Method to draw in Customers, which our *Chinese* would not like. If their Wives are handsome, they place them near the Shop-Door, as if they were put there for Signs of the Merchandise sold within. The *French*, who are naturally gay and frolicksome can't resist the Pleasure of chatting some Moments with a pretty Woman, and they say so many fine Things to this Spouse, that by this means the Tradesman by Degrees puts off all his Wares. I have been assur'd, that many who happened not to have handsome Wives, supply that Defect by pretty Girls, whom they dress fine to keep their Shops in the Place of their dear Halves, whose Noses are too short, or

* This Term means an Exchange.
† The Shops at the Palace.

their

their Eyes too little; for thou must observe, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that what is a Deformity is *China*, is counted a Beauty in *Europe*. Nations are so different in their Tastes, that they are not agreed even in what renders them handsome or ugly *. A sad Proof this of the uncertain Course which all Men steer, without Hopes of reaching the Shore in a dark Night. We make Beauty consist in a broad Forehead, a short Nose, Pink-Eyes, a large square Face, and great long Ears; but such a Physiognomy is a terrible Eye-sore to a *Parisian*. To be beautiful, in his Opinion, a Person must have a Nose rather long than short, the Eyes large and well cut, the Face a little long and oval, the Ears small, and the Forehead rather narrow than broad. There being so great a Difference between the Taste of the *Europeans* and *Chinese*, I wonder'd to find a *French* Author, whom I lately read, saying, That a Trifle excepted, we had both the same Idea of Beauty; whereas I don't believe, there are any two Nations in the World whose Sentiments, in this Respect, are more different.

I have observ'd however, that in all Time past, the *Europeans* have had a Contempt for the broad Foreheads, which we so much admire. One of the old *Romans* † highly extols his Mistress for her little Forehead. The *Roman* Women were so fond of having narrow Foreheads, that they bound them in Rollers to make them less. Nevertheless, a Forehead too narrow wou'd be thought disagreeable at this time in *France*, and be even looked upon as the Mark of a Fool. At *Paris*, they are as much out of Conceit with a Forehead like that of

* *Turpis Romano Belgicus ore Color.* Propert. lib. 2.

† *Horace* speaking of his dear *Lycoris*, says, *Inſignis tenui fronte.*

the

the old *Romans*, as they are with that of the *Chineſe*. They think the one as much too little, as they do the other too large; and this, perhaps, is the only thing in which the *French* preſerve a Medium.

Farewel, Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,
and let me hear from thee.

LETTER V.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

AS much prepoſſeſs'd, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, as the *French* are in their own Favour, how good an Opinion ſoever they have of every thing that they do, and every thing that they have, yet they have no grounded Averſion to foreign Cuſtoms, and eſpecially foreign Modes, which they eaſily adopt; but 'tis true, they add to or diminiſh from them, to the End that they may be ſaid to have the *French* Goût; for tho' they will allow, that there may be Wit and Talents in other Countries, yet they think, that ſuch Wit and ſuch Talents, are not ſo refined as they are in *France*. The *French* have good Senſe enough to improve the Diſcoveries made by Foreigners; but they are ſo vain as to appropriate the ſame to themſelves, and to pretend to the Invention of them, or at leaſt to have brought them to Perfection, tho' the Alterations

tions they have made in them are ever so trivial. Thou wilt perhaps ask me, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, of what Sort are these Alterations; I must tell thee, they are generally more glaring than substantial, and more ingenious than useful; but, after all, there is some Sense in knowing how to accommodate to one's own Taste whatever may be of Service to us.

Since our *Chinese* are altogether as vain as the *French*, I could wish, they were also as cunning, and that they would study to improve the Hints given them by other Nations, for bringing the Arts and Sciences to Perfection. Our Aversion to the Manners and Customs of the *Europeans*, is as pernicious as it is ridiculous; 'tis carried too far, which I cannot conceive should be the Case with a People, where the Study of Wisdom is the principal Study of all that aspire to Employments.

We see *European* Ships every Day, and admire the Construction of them; and tho' that of ours is bad, dangerous for Navigation, and inconvenient for the Mariners; yet we don't leave off our old Way of building them. We think, it would be a Crime to alter it, and that the Majesty of the Empire would be degraded by it, as if the Grandeur of a State depended on the Maintenance and Continuation of old Errors, that are deeply rooted in it, and as if it were impossible to be wiser and more artful, without diminishing in Lustre and Respect. We must confess, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that our Vanity is misplaced. Did not the Architects of *Pekin* deserve to be pitied, when there was a Necessity of using Force to oblige them to build that Temple, which is within the Palace, after a Model that came from *Europe*?

I forgive the *Chinese* for being so ridiculously vain, before they had any Idea of the World; and when they ask'd the first *Europeans*, whom they

ſaw, if they had any Towns, Villages, and Houſes, they might well imagine, that their Empire was almoſt as extenſive as the whole Earth, that there was nothing out of *China* worth ſeeing or enjoying, and that their Men of Letters knew every thing that was to be known; but now, that they are ſenſible how far the *Europeans* out-ſtrip them in almoſt all the Arts, and in all the Sciences, they ought to depart from their Errors, and to give up their Prejudices. I wiſh, they would but ſometimes caſt an Eye upon a Map of the World, and that when they ſee what a little Corner of it *China* takes up, they would ſeriouſly reflect on the miſtaken Notion they had of it's vaſt Extent, before they knew the Dimenſions of the whole Globe. This was a Diſcovery that prov'd of very great Benefit to two Mandarins of my Acquaintance, who, running over a Map of the World, together with an *European*, they ask'd him, whereabouts their Country was, imagining, that it took up at leaſt the Hemiſphere, which contains *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*. "See "that Space there, *ſaid the* European, that's *Aſia*. "Here, in this Part of the World, lies *Perſia*, the "*Indies*, and *Tartary*. And that little Spot there, "is *China*." The Mandarins were ſo aſtoniſhed, that they ſtared at one another, and ſaid, *'Twas ſmall indeed.*

Tho' the Vanity of the *Chineſe* is different from that of the *French*, and tho' they are not quite ſo fond of themſelves; yet their Attachment to Life, and the Care they take of the Offices to be perform'd after Death, are the ſame in both; and in this, the two Nations perhaps reſemble one another the moſt.

The *Chineſe* are continually in dread of the laſt Moment; which Apprehenſion diſturbs the whole Courſe of their Lives, poiſons their moſt charming Pleaſures,

Pleaſures, and the cruel Idea of it haunts them in the midſt of their Feaſts, Plays, and other Entertainments. A Part of their Lives is ſpent in preparing Neceſſaries for their Interment. The Precaution, or rather Folly of the People, is, in this Article, very extravagant; a poor Tradeſman, that has but nine or ten Piſtoles, will lay them out in a Coffin above twenty Years before his Death, and think it the moſt valuable and the moſt uſeful Furniture he has. It looks, as if he fear'd he ſhould not have wherewithal to lay him in the Ground, and that it ought to be the principal Employment of his Life to make Proviſion for an Exigency, of which he will not be ſenſible any more than the inanimate Timber in which he is to be incloſed.

When I ſee, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, how anxious the Generality of Mankind, and eſpecially the *Chineſe*, are to prepare for their Funerals, methinks, I ſee a Madman putting the Husk or Rind of a Fruit, from which he has ſqueez'd or ſuck'd all the Juice, into Veſſels of Gold. For what is a dead Corpſe, but a Lump of ſtinking rotten Clay, from which all that was good for any thing is evaporated?

The *Europeans* make every whit as much ado about their Burials as the *Chineſe*. The Ground of their Church-Yards is covered with Epitaphs; their Temples are full of Tombs; and they lay out conſiderable Sums in the building of them while they live. A Man, who would not beſtow a couple of Piſtoles to ſave the Life of a poor Wretch, will lay out ten thouſand Crowns in the building of a ſtately Mauſoleum; where, after the Mention of all the Titles, Names, and Offices of the Perſon who is to be there interr'd, he is no ſooner intomb'd, but they add the moſt impudent Lyes in a Panegyric, written in Characters of Gold upon the hardeſt Marble.

Such as these are the Lyes that have serv'd to obscure the History of the *Europeans*, and to render it fabulous and romantic. We may say of Epitaphs, what an ancient *Roman* Orator said of the Memoirs of Families, and Elegies upon the Dead.-- He tells us, that Funeral Orations had contributed very much to falsify History. "How * many "Facts are not therein mention'd, *said he*, which "never happened? How many Triumphs that "never were in the World? Even Consulships "are recorded therein that never existed; and Fa"milies are said to have passed in Process of Time, "from the *Patrician* to the *Plebeian*, many People "pretending to derive their Descent from some "illustrious Family, of the same Name; just as if "I should say, I was descended from *M. Tullius* the "*Patrician*, who was Consul ten Years after the "Expulsion of the Kings, because I call myself "*Tullius* as well as he."

What this Author says of the *Romans*, may be very justly apply'd to the *French*, and even to all the *Europeans*. We see now Genealogies every Day founded upon false Titles, or borrow'd Pieces, which are afterwards cramm'd into those Histories that are most in vogue. There's a great Body of History here, to which they give the Name of the Historical Dictionary †, partly stuff'd with the Genealogies and Memoirs of the modern Families,

* *Quamquam his laudationibus historia rerum nostrarum facta est mendosior; multa enim scripta sunt in eis, quæ facta non sunt, falsi Triumphi, plures Consulatus, Genera etiam falsa & ad plebem transitiones, cum homines humiliores in alienum ejusdem nominis infunderentur genus; ut si ego me a M. Tullio, qui Patricius Consul Anno* X. *post Reges exactos fuit.* Cic. in Bruto, cap. XVI.

† *Morery*'s Dictionary.

which,

which, by the means of some Resemblance of the Name, or some lying Epitaph, have been grafted upon more ancient Families, most of which are entirely extinct. *Melampus*, whose Grandfather was an Apothecary in a little Town of the Isle of *France*, is descended in this historical Work from the first Counts *de Bes* ***. *Alcippus*, whose Grandfather was a Jockey, is descended from one that was Master of the Horse to *Charles* the Great; and *Crisaldus*, whose Grandfather was a Wine-Merchant, by the Favour of some old Inscription found in a Church, derives his Origin from an *Italian* Prince.

Lysander has furnished a large Field of Matter in an Inscription which he has caused to be put upon his Tomb, to countenance the Fables which his Descendants should have a Fancy to invent. He has caused the Names of all the Towns to be engrav'd, where he ordered Bread to be bak'd for the Army; and to this geographical List he has added, *He alone kept up the Spirits and Courage of the Soldiers.* Who, forgetting that *Lysander* was an Undertaker of Provisions and Forrage, would not be apt to think, that he was General of an Army? And, who would imagine, that he sustain'd the *Strength and Courage of the Soldiers by Bread and Meat?*

For the Benefit of History, and for the Preservation of the Respect due to Truth, there ought to be a severe Prohibition, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, in all Countries, to erect any public Inscription of what sort soever, which has not been previously examin'd by Censors appointed for that Purpose only. Then a General would be either blamed or commended on his Tomb, according to the Merit or Demerit of his Actions. Flattery could not prostitute Praises to a Te----- which were design'd for the *Turennes*, the *Villars*, the *Broglios*, and the *Coguis*; and the *Chamillards* could not expect to be trans-

mitted to Posterity for the *Hopitals* and the *Daguesseaux*. I should not quote all these *French* Names to thee, if the Intimacy which thou hast had for above twenty Years with the Missionaries, and the Knowledge of their Language, of which thou art perfect Master, had not put it in thy Power to know the History of this Country. Yet I will tell thee, that since I have been here, I perceive, that the Books which the Missionaries sent us at *China*, are not in the general either exact or true. We too easily imbib'd what certain *Europeans* told us, who were as much concerned in Intereſt, as the Authors of those Books, to disguise the Truth. I will endeavour the best I can to point out the Snares which they laid for us. Farewel, and be always diffident of People who seem too much wedded to their own Opinions.

LETTER VI.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

I HAD not Time in my last, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, to take Notice of every Article wherein the *French* and *Chinese* resemble one another in what relates to their Attachment to Life. I had only Leisure to tell thee, how well they agree in an Ambition of leaving Tombs and Epitaphs behind them

to

to perpetuate their Memory; but now I prepare to acquaint thee of what I was then forced to omit.

The Number of Ceremonies which are observed by the *French* when they are sick, seem to be so many evident Proofs how terribly afraid they are of Death. The *Chineſe* too are exceſſively fond of Life; but as for the Generality, when they are dangerouſly indiſpoſed, they call in their Reaſon to their Aid, put a violent Reſtraint upon their own Fleſh and Blood, and wait for Death quietly enough. Nor is it neceſſary to uſe a great deal of Precaution in telling them that their laſt Hour is coming, a Sentence, which the *French*, on the contrary, never give without a World of Caution. The Phyſician never ſpeaks of it but ambiguouſly, nor do the Prieſts talk of it in Terms much plainer, who offer their Care and their Help only as Remedies, that are as good for the Tranquility of the Soul, as for the Recovery of the Body.

'Tis very common to ſee the *French*, eſpecially thoſe of any Rank, dye, before ever they knew what Danger they were in, becauſe no body had the Courage to tell them their Condition plainly and ſincerely. They propoſe it to a Perſon of Diſtinction to make his Will, becauſe he is then more tranquil; they adviſe him to the Ceremonies and Cuſtoms of his Religion, becauſe Decency requires it; they ſpeak to him of God, becauſe they give Hopes that he may reſtore him to his Health; they ask him, what his laſt Commands are, on Pretence that they are not willing to do any thing to diſoblige him whilſt he lives; in ſhort, they try a hundred different Stratagems to make him do what they would obtain of him in an Inſtant, if they did but ſay to him, *There's no Hopes of your Life, you muſt think of dying very ſoon.*

Notwithstanding all the Care which the *French* take, not to tell the Patient, in plain Terms, that he will dye, they have such melancholy dismal Customs as have a greater Tendency towards disturbing a Man who is afraid to dye, than the Sentence of Death pronounc'd ever so incautiously and bluntly by a Physician. Every Ceremony shews the several Stages of the Disease. When it begins to be dangerous, the Physician calls for the Scrivener; and if it grows worse, he brings in the Priest. The latter too acts by Gradation; First, he hears what Sins the sick Person has to confess himself guilty of, from which he absolves him, and, in the Name of Heaven, pardons him. After this, if the Danger increases, he gives him a little consecrated Bread to eat; which, of all the Mysteries with the Christians, is the greatest and the most august. And after all, when there is no more Hopes, he rubs all the Extremities of his Members with Holy Oil.

Tell me, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, whether all these Ceremonies are not tantamount to the most emphatical Speeches; and whether the *French*, who know at what time, and in what Cases, to practise them, don't give Judgment of their State as perfectly, as if their Physicians said to them, as they do in *China*, *'Tis certain, that you will dye to-day, or to-morrow.* Moreover, there's nothing has a greater Tendency to augment the Fear of Death, than the Apparatus made before it by the *French*, and all the *Europeans*. When a Man is dangerously ill, there is nothing to be heard in his House but the Cries of the Mother, the Lamentations and Groans of Children and Brothers, the Complaints of Servants, and the Sighs of Friends. His Bed-Chamber, which makes a sad and melancholy Appearance, is lighted by Wax-Candles for want of the

the Day-Light, that cannot be ſeen thro' the Windows which are cloſe ſhut. His Bed is ſurrounded by Prieſts, Phyſicians, and pale Footmen all in Tears. What Man is there ever ſo intrepid, who, in ſuch a Situation, could avoid being ſeiz'd with Fear! Here, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, they dare not tell People that they are in Danger of dying, for fear of terrifying them; and yet they put every thing in Practice that is moſt capable of producing that Effect. Strange Conſequence of human Prejudices, that put a Man upon doing that in the moſt cruel Way, which at the ſame time he thinks he avoids.

Tho' the *French*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, are ſo afraid of Death, when they ſee it ſlowly approaching, yet they are brave and couragious Soldiers; which is a Contradiction founded in the Temper of the Man, and eſpecially the *Frenchman*. When he is animated by Glory, Hatred, or Ambition; when he is in his full Strength and Vigour, both of Body and Mind, he thinks not of the Approach of Death, and its Apparatus gives him no Manner of Terror. The ſame Man who ſhall tremble in his Bed at the Sight of the Phyſician, ſhall go with a very great Reſolution and Courage to the Attack of a Baſtion, or a cover'd Way. The *French* may be ſaid not to fear Death at all, when it appears to them in the Image of Glory; which Paſſion has the very ſame Effect upon them, as Melancholy and Rage have upon the *Chineſe:* for let the latter be ever ſo fond of Life, there are ſeveral, even among the Fair-Sex, who put themſelves to Death in a Fit of Anger, or Deſpair, or for meer Madneſs, becauſe they have not been able to ſatiate their Revenge.

The laſt Vice indeed is not near ſo common among the *French*, as it is among the *Chineſe*. If Revenge be taken in this Country 'tis ſoon after the

Affront given, and generally in a noble Manner, without the leaſt Ingredient of Treachery; the *French*, 'tis true, have not Virtue enough to pardon an Offence; but then they have too much, on the other hand, to take a cowardly Revenge. This, however, is what can't be ſaid of the Generality of our Countrymen; one of the things, which they put in practice to hurt their Enemies, being to ſet Fire, in the Night-time, to their Houſes. This is a Deed ſo infamous, that it would be almoſt incredible if daily Experience did not prove it to be true. For they never take a Revenge without Deliberation; they chuſe the proper Time to put their pernicious Deſigns in Execution, and diſſemble their Diſſatisfaction till the very Moment that they can gratify their Malice. Inſtead of proceeding to Acts of Violence immediately, as the *French* do, they pretend not to be ſenſible of the Affront and Injury which they think they have received. The People of Diſtinction are eſpecially as careful to conceal their Anger, and to preſerve Appearances and Decorums with their Enemies, as the *French* Gentlemen are forward to ſhew their Reſentment againſt theirs. They delay to take a Revenge, in order to do it with the more Safety; and when they find an Opportunity, they ſnap at it greedily.

I have obſerv'd, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that the mortal Hatred which puſhes the *Chineſe* upon ſuch horrid Outrages, is generally owing to the Inclination they have to Law-Suits, for which they mortgage and pawn their Lands, Houſes, Furniture, and even the Neceſſaries of Life. When they happen to be caſt, they are left in a moſt miſerable Plight; which makes them ſtark-mad with their Adverſaries, whom they look upon as the principal Authors of their Misfortunes; whereas they only ought to

thank

thank themſelves, and their litigious Humour, for all their Sufferings.

Another thing that adds to the Vexation of thoſe who go to Law in *China*, is, that ſeveral Law-Suits are determin'd there after the Manner of the *Turks*; and that the Mandarins cauſe Baſtinadoes to be inflicted on ſuch as they think have gone to Law without any juſt Cauſe, or for none at all.

The *French* in general are but too fond of Law-Suits; and there is a certain Province near *Paris*, in which they go to Law as readily as they do in *China*. I have been even aſſured, that there are ſome People who buy Law-Suits of others; and ſometimes it happens, that a Man who has but three Cauſes for his Subſiſtence, ſells two of them, to have wherewithal to furniſh the Expence of the third. But theſe are not at all afraid of the Fate of thoſe at *China*. The Judges are ſo far from giving the Baſtinado to a Man who loſes a bad Cauſe, that, in order to pacify him and to procure him the Means of getting another, they always inſert in their Sentences, or Arrets, ſome ambiguous Clauſe, which does not fail to furniſh Matter for a new Trial. A Man, who has loſt his Cauſe before the Judges of the Bailywic, appeals to thoſe of the Seneſchalſhip: If he has the ſame Fate there, he goes to the Preſidial Court: Is he again caſt he may appeal to the Parliament, the Deciſion of whoſe Sovereign Tribunal thou doſt believe, no doubt, muſt be final: but 'tis not ſo, for the Client gets the Arret of the Parliament ſet aſide, and appeals to the King's Council; where, tho' he obtains what he demands, he is but juſt where he began: for the Council, which never goes to the Bottom of Affairs, only decides whether Sentence has been given purſuant to the Ordinance, and then refers the Cauſe to another Parliament.

Do but think, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, how many Stripes would be laid upon the Back of a Client, if he had only forty Baſtinadoes for every Court he goes thro'; what Mortal is there that thinks he has a Back brawny enough to venture the carrying on a bad Law-Suit? Yet there are a great many more of this ſort than good ones, and the Judges ſet aſide both alike. A Law-Suit is called Good or Bad by the Gentlemen of the Long-Robe, according to the Money they get by it. They ſay, that their Buſineſs is to judge of Men's Diſputes, but not to prevent them. Inſtead of offering to ſtop the Proceſs of a knaviſh Cauſe, they look upon it to be of as great Service to them, as a certain Surgeon did that of the P---- to himſelf. For being one Day very devoutly upon his Knees, before the Statue of a certain King, who, 'tis ſaid, brought that Diſeaſe from *Naples* into *France*, a Prieſt, who took him in the Fact, ſaid to him, *Friend, you are quite miſtaken, the Statue you are praying to is not the Image of a Saint.* "I have more Obligation, Fa-"ther, *reply'd the Surgeon*, to the Perſon hereby "repreſented, than to all the Saints that are in "this Church: Had it not been for him, I and my "Brethren ſhould hardly have Bread to eat." This, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is the Way of all Men's Thinking: They reduce every thing to their own Intereſt; and they care not for the Misfortunes of any of their Countrymen, if they can but turn them to their own Advantage.

Fare thee well, and pray let me hear from thee.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

From YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin *to* SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris.

THO U can'ſt not imagine, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, how much I am pleaſed with thy Letters; I have read them over ſeveral times, and obſerve, that what Account thou giv'ſt me of the Manners and Cuſtoms of the *French* is conſiſtent with the Diſcovery I have been able to make of the Matter by the long Acquaintance I have had with the *European* Merchants and the Miſſionaries. Indeed, I was very dubious whether I ought not to be upon my Guard againſt what the latter told me, and whether I ought to give Credit to what they ſaid, till I had maturely conſider'd it. I ſhall be very much oblig'd to thee, if thou wilt tell me whether every thing they ſay here about the Union of the Chriſtians, the Peace that dwells among them, and the Sobriety and Meekneſs of their Prieſts, is ſtrictly true. Thou knoweſt, that tho' I am a Friend to the Miſſionaries, I always adher'd to the illuſtrious *Confucius*, and that the Diſcourſes they have had with me upon the Article of Religion could never ſhake me. Not that I do not think the Religion of the *Europeans* very good, and much to be valued; but, 'tis my Opinion, that their

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Religion, who, like me, ſtick to the Text of the Canonical Books; without troubling their Heads with the modern Gloſſes, is very ſenſible and rational.

I am perſuaded of the Eternal Exiſtence of a Firſt Mover, Author, and Principle of all Beings, who governs this World, knows the Bottom of all Hearts, puniſhes Vice, and rewardeth Virtue. By the Words *Changti & Tieu*, I don't underſtand, as the vulgar *Chineſe* do, the viſible and material Heaven, but a ſovereign Spirit independent of Matter, to which, by its Power, it gives Life and Form. I ſhould be glad, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, that thou wer't of the ſame Opinion. Thou know'ſt, I have often told thee, that I could not approve of thy Sentiments, and that I thought them contrary to the cleareſt Notions. I often talk about it with a *Jeſuit* of thy Acquaintance, and we are both of us ſurpriz'd to ſee a Man of thy Senſe ſtill attach'd to a Sect that leads to meer Atheiſm. How can'ſt thou conceive, that 'tis not only poſſible to explain the Order and Regulation of the Univerſe, but its Formation and Production too, by material Cauſes.

Such Opinions would never have been eſtabliſh'd at *China*, if People had always taken care to preſerve the Innocence, Candour, and Simpicity of the Primitive Ages; but, by Misfortune, the ancient Monuments were neglected, and thoſe Books which contain'd ſound Doctrine, abandon'd, to make way for Authors more remarkable for the Diſplay of their Eloquence, than for their Purſuit of Truth.

Permit me, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, to put thee in mind how the Sect thou haſt embrac'd was firſt form'd; and don't think, I am influenc'd by Paſſion or Prejudice to ſeek for Reaſons to ſtain its Original. In the Reign of the Sixth Prince of the Family of *Seng*, there was an Attempt to repair the

Injury

Injury, which the different Sects had for some time past done to the Empire, into which they had introduced the Worship of strange Deities * that prov'd the Occasion of bloody Wars. Certain learned Men undertook not only to comment upon the ancient canonical Books, but also to explain the Commentaries, which *Confucius*, and his Disciple *Mencius*, had wrote upon those very Books about 1500 Years before. Of these modern Commentators, *Tchu-tse* and *Tching-tse* were the most eminent. They began with deviating from the Text, tho' not near so much as the forty Doctors whom the Emperor *Yong-La* order'd three hundred Years after to compile a System of Doctrine that might be followed by all Men of Learning, and which was conformable to the Commentaries of *Tchu-tse* and *Tching-tse*. These new Interpreters perform'd their Commission; they adher'd intirely to the two Doctors that had gone before them, and tho' they did not venture openly to abandon the Sense and Doctrine of the ancient Books that claim'd, and had so much Respect over all the Empire, yet they corrupted both as far as was possible. They slipp'd the dangerous Venom of Atheism into their Interpretations, and either by their Eloquence, or the Credit which they had in the Empire, or, in short, by the Authority of the Emperor, who protected them, they established their new Hypotheses. Several of the learned Men embraced them; but many others exclaim'd against this new Doctrine, and the forced Interpretations that were put both upon the Text of the ancient Books, and the Commentaries of *Confucius*, and the Authors who had closely followed him.

It must be frankly owned, that in the Works of the first Legislators of *China*, Mention was never made

* Idols.

made of this Material Principle eſtabliſh'd by the modern Doctors, and call'd *Tac-ki*, of which there's no Token in the five Canonical Books *, nor in the four of *Confucius* and *Mencius*. This *Tac-ki*, according to them, is a ſecret and occult Virtue; which cannot be clearly explain'd; 'tis a Being ſeparate from the Imperfections of Matter, which being diffuſed thro' this vaſt Univerſe, connects all its Parts, maintains them in their Correſpondence, preſerves them in Harmony, gives them Life and Form; 'tis, in ſhort, of all Beings the Baſis and Foundation. 'Tis that which makes all the Alterations in them, and regulates their Order and Motion; nevertheleſs this occult Virtue has no Intelligence, but is blind in its moſt regular Operation, and conducts the Whole with ſtupendous Wiſdom, without knowing that it conducts any thing.

What a Syſtem is here, Dear *Sieou-Tcheou!* and how contrary is it, in my Opinion, to the plaineſt Notions! How is it poſſible for this blind Matter to perform what neceſſarily requires the moſt perfect Intelligence? How can it govern the Univerſe, if it does not know itſelf? How can intelligent Beings, ſuch as Men are, flow from a material Principle, if they have not received their Qualities from this *Primum Mobile*? To what elſe are they oblig'd for it? Is it to Matter? This is as blind as *Tac-ki*, and even more imperfect. Is it to Chance? How comes it then, that we don't ſee intelligent Trees and Stones, and that Chance only grants Perception to organis'd Matter, ſuch as that which forms human Bodies? Is it this Organiſation which is the

* Theſe are five of the oldeſt Books of the *Chineſe*, and may be called their *Deuteronomy*. The *Chineſe* call them *King*. The Authors liv'd ſeveral Ages before *Confucius*.

Cauſe

Cauſe of Intelligence? But if ſo, who has regulated that this ſhould be always the ſame, by Virtue of which Law this is ſo well obſerved? How is it poſſible, that in this vaſt Univerſe every thing ſhould be ſo juſt, ſo balanc'd, ſo beautiful and exact, and yet this Order not provided by an intelligent Being? The Family of the meaneſt Inhabitant in *Pekin* runs into Confuſion, if the Maſter lets but two Days paſs without his Care of it; and can the Univerſe fare better without a Conductor than the Houſhold of a *Chineſe*?

The weak Reaſons urged in Anſwer to theſe Objections, fall to the Ground of themſelves. The *Tac-ki*, ſay theſe modern Doctors, is with regard to all Beings, the ſame as the Ridge with regard to a Houſe. It ſerves to unite all its Parts; in like manner this puiſſant and conceal'd Virtue preſerves all thoſe of the Univerſe, into what Shape ſoever they are transformed. If a Door, or Bench, be made of a Piece of Wood, 'tis the *Tac-ki* gives the Door, or Bench, its Form: If this Door be broke into ſeveral Pieces, 'tis the *Tac-ki* alſo which gives them their new Forms; conſequently, 'tis that which directs, regulates, and determines every thing that happens.

To what purpoſe, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, ſerves this vicious Circle of needleſs Explications? Muſt not we always revert to this principal Point, *viz.* How the *Tac-ki* performs whatever it does? Is it by a blind Intelligence? This is impoſſible. Is it with Knowledge of the Cauſe? Then 'tis a firſt Intelligent Principle, which knows every thing, from which nothing is concealed, and whoſe Providence is immenſe. Your Syſtem is not to be ſupported, both as it runs counter to the cleareſt Notions, and becauſe it contradicts and deſtroys itſelf.

When

When the *Partisans* of the new Commentators are hard push'd, they are oblig'd to fall into manifest Contradictions. The *Tac-ki*, one may say to them, being the Essence of all Beings, is so likewise of the Soul. You own, that the Soul is an Intelligence. How can a thing have an essential Quality, which is not to be found in its Essence? Either the human Soul must be as blind as Matter, or that which constitutes it must be most discerning. There are two Sorts of Natures therefore in the *Tac-ki*; the one intelligent, which constitutes the Essence of Souls; the other passive and inanimate, which constitutes Bodies. Now is it possible, that in one Principle singly, there should be two Natures equally opposite, one of them to be knowing, the other blind? Either the *Tac-ki* must be an intelligent Being animated above Matter, which, in fine, acts the same Part in the Universe, as the Soul does in the Body, which it governs with Cognisance of the Cause, or it must be totally material, and it must act without knowing that it acts. If the new Doctors agree, that the *Tac-ki* is Intelligent, they destroy their own System; if they deprive it of all Knowledge, they are obliged to contradict themselves, because they make it the Principle of intelligent Beings, which is absurd, for the Reasons I just now mentioned.

This, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, is what I have said to thee more than once concerning the Opinions which thou hast embraced without duly examining them. Reflect again, I entreat thee, upon the Objections I have now been making; impart them to some *Frenchman* of thy Acquaintance, and thou wilt perceive that he will not scruple to condemn thy Errors; for the System of the new Commentators seems to the *Europeans*, not only absurd, but also very criminal. They say, it destroys all the moral

moral Virtues, that it authoriſes Men to commit the greateſt Crimes, that it aſſures everlaſting Tranquility to the worſt of Villains, becauſe it baniſhes the Divine Providence, and annihilates Rewards and Puniſhments after Death. It follows likewiſe from the Opinion of the modern Doctors, that we ought to purſue nothing in this World but the Gratification of our Paſſions; for when there is no ſuch thing as either Vice or Virtue, as muſt be own'd to be the Caſe, when all things that happen are conſider'd as the Conſequence and Operation of a blind Principle, there's a Neceſſity of purſuing whatever may pleaſe our Deſires? To what purpoſe ſhould we think of reſtraining them, and what Advantage, what Reward can we hope for from it? People are meer Fools to torment themſelves for nothing, and to prefer the Public Good to their own Satisfaction. Conſider, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, to what thy Syſtem leads, and ſee its pernicious Conſequences which tend to no leſs than the Sapping of the Foundations of all Society.

Farewel.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

THE *French*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, are divided into as many Sects as the *Chineſe* are; of whoſe Sects the three principal are. 1. That of the Learned, who adhere to the Doctrine of the ancient Canonical Books, and to the Explanations given of it by *Confucius* and the other Doctors. 2. That of the Followers of *Lao-Kium*. And, 3. That which worſhips the Deity *Foe*.

At *Paris*, there are three principal Sects, which may be compared to thoſe three *Chineſe*; and I think the Parallel very juſt. By what I am now to inform thee of, thou wilt ſee whether that Union among the Chriſtians, which is ſo much talk'd of by the Miſſionaries, is ſuch as they give it out to be. I aſſure thee beforehand, that the *Europeans* ſeem to be as uncertain in the Affairs of Religion as the *Indians*. The one condemns what the other approves. This Man treats his Adverſary as a Fool; and he calls him a Knave; another accuſes him of Debauchery and Libertiniſm; a fourth pretends, that they are all three equally miſtaken, and would fain have them burnt, that Heaven may be aveng'd for their Outrage. In truth, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, the

the thing, about which the *Europeans*, and especially the *French*, differ most, is Religion. I come now to the Parallel of their Sects with those of *China*, and shall begin with that of the Men of Learning. This Sect boasts of adhering only to the Text of the old Canonical Books, condemns the others as Innovations against the Public Good, and reproaches them with Superstition, Knavery, Ignorance, *&c.* Yet this Sect is divided, and is far from an Agreement with themselves; for some of its Followers are only for adhering to the old Commentators: That's thy Opinion, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*; but, for my part, I am of Opinion, with many others of the learned Sect, that the modern Doctors have had a better Sense of the Canonical Books.

The Case is the very same at *Paris* among the Learned, who, all alike, pretend to be attach'd to the literal Meaning of the old Canonical Books, despise, abuse, and condemn the other Sects, and reproach them with corrupting the ancient Doctrine; yet they agree no better with one another than the learned Men of *China*. Some are for adhering to the ancient Commentators, and to the Writings of certain *Greek* and *Latin* Doctors; of whom the chief are, *Bazil*, *Chrysostome*, *Augustine*, *Jerome*, and *Gregory* of *Nazianzen*. Others, on the contrary, adopt the Sentiments of the modern Interpreters, saying, that *Calvin*, *Beza*, and *Melancthon* have explain'd the Text of the Canonical Books better than the Ancients.

Don't imagine, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that the Opinions, which are canvass'd among the Learned, are of small Importance to their Religion; for, on the contrary, the Articles that are in question are the most fundamental. That * which the Missionaries

* Transubstantiation.

naries eſtabliſh at *China*, as the moſt eſſential, is totally rejected by the Followers of the modern Commentators: Nor will they acknowledge the Sovereign Pontiff at *Rome*, but ſay, on the contrary, that he is the Deſtroyer of Religion.

Thou wilt be ſurprized perhaps that neither the *European* Books which have been lent to thee by the Miſſionaries, nor the Converſation thou haſt had with them, have never informed thee of the Difference which is ſo conſiderable between the learned Men of *France*; I will now let thee into the Reaſons of it. Thou know'ſt, that in *China* Perſecutions are mortally hated, and religious Wars held in Abhorrence; and the Miſſionaries would be tolerated there no longer, if it was known that the Opinions which they teach might one Day or other be hurtful to the State. Now, 'tis proper thou ſhould'ſt know that for a long time the Friends of the Old Commentators have waged cruel War with the Moderns; and the latter, in their Turn, endeavour to defend themſelves the beſt they can. In *France*, there were Maſſacres committed for above the Space of a Century, to know what Senſe ought to be put upon a Verſe of one of the Canonical Books. One Town was burnt becauſe its learned Inhabitants pretended that the Supreme Being underſtood all Languages, and that Prayer might be made to him in the *French*. On the other hand, thoſe Prieſts who embraced the Opinions of the ancient Doctors, had their Throats cut; their Followers were caſt headlong from the Top of a Rock down frightful Precipices; the Towns, of which they made themſelves Maſters, were deſtroy'd by the Sword; and the Fury of thoſe who adher'd to the new Commentators was as great as theirs who oppoſed them. In ſhort, after the moſt bloody Wars, and the moſt cruel Proſcriptions, the Party for

for the Ancients got the better of that of the Moderns, and put the other not only to Silence, but banished a great Part of them out of the Kingdom. The learned Partisans of the modern Doctors that remain in *France* now, are obliged to keep Silence, to give no Indication of their Opinion, and to despise their Sentiments upon certain Occasions.

Should the criminal and bloody Divisions of the Learned in *France*, be ever known in *China*, I make no doubt, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, but it would do the Missionaries a great Prejudice. The Consequences of their Religion will be dreaded, and they will be for putting those People away from them who are incessantly preaching up Toleration when they are weak, but always for putting a Force upon Consciences whenever they are in Power. I will frankly own to thee, that before I came to *France*, and knew what Evils *Europe* has suffered from religious Disputes, I had a better Opinion than I have now of Christianity; that Law, so wise and excellent, being stain'd and debased by those who profess it. Really, 'tis my Opinion that three Fourths of the *French* look upon the Religion they profess as a Fable; for if they believ'd it, they would undoubtedly act up to its Principles; whereas they do the very reverse. Their Religion tells them, that they ought to be humble; patient, modest, to forgive Injuries, to enlighten the Heart and the Understanding by Reason, and not by Violence; but, on the contrary, they cut Throats, massacre, hang, burn for meer Theological Disputes; and what is worse, they pretend to be justified in committing all these Cruelties, and that they are commanded to do it by their Religion, when the defending it, or the extending its Prerogatives are the Points in question.

If this single Principle of theirs comes to be known in *China*, farewel to Christianity in that Country.

Country. Methinks, I hear the Miniſters of State ſay; " If ever theſe People ſhould be ſtrong enough " to form a Party, they would undoubtedly do the " ſame things here as they have done in *Europe*. " They would compel us by Force to receive their " Opinions; they would, if they were once the " Maſters, be as harſh and cruel as they now ſeem " humble and charitable. Let us drive theſe " Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing out of *China*. " Let us convince the Emperor that his Quality " engages him to remove out of his Country Diſ- " turbers who are the more dangerous becauſe " they ſecretly foment the moſt obſtinate Seditions, " and make Religion a Cloak for all their Crimes. " The Privileges that have been granted to the Miſ- " ſionaries in former Reigns, ought to be no Re- " ſtraint upon him. Every Prince that finds wicked " Men ſettled in his Dominions, either thro' the " Neglect of his Anceſtors, or for want of know- " ing their Crimes, is juſtified in expelling them as " often as the Good of the Public demands it."

Thus, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, will the Mandarins of all the Great Tribunals undoubtedly argue, if ever they come to have a true Knowledge of the Hiſtory of *Europe*, and if once they hear what is the real Moral of the Miſſionaries. They will not ſuffer themſelves to be ſeduced by all the Proteſtations which the *Europeans* can make to them. They will ſay to them, " How can we give any " Credit to Preachments to which you ſo haughtily " give the Lye in thoſe Countries where you are " the Maſters? Your pernicious Religion may be " compared to a Man conſidered at two different " Ages. In his Childhood, he is modeſt, good- " natur'd, humble, and patient, becauſe he fears " Correction. The little Power which you have " now in *China* compels you to be officious, de-

" bonnair

" bonnair and peaceable. When this ſame Perſon " is arriv'd to Manhood, he laughs at his Superiors, " deſpiſes them, rebuffs them, maltreats them, and " at length baniſhes them, and quite gets rid of " them. Thus would you do with regard to us; " and you would not give us any better Uſage. Is " it probable you can have a Reſpect for Foreign- " ers, which you have not for your own Country- " men? And ſince you have not been able to live " quiet in your own Families, ſince the Father has " proſcrib'd his Son, and the Son his Father, to " force them to be of the ſame Opinion, ought we " to flatter ourſelves that you would endeavour " to perſuade us in a Manner leſs barbarous, if it " was at your Liberty to diſſemble no longer?"

Let the Miſſionaries be ever ſo ſubtle, and ever ſo fruitful in Expedients, what can they ſay, or what can they do to hinder their Baniſhment? I don't ſee, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that they have any Reſource left. Will they deny what has paſſed, and what happens every Day in *Europe*? Their Lyes will be eaſily confuted, and will only ſerve to increaſe the Suſpicions of their Diſſimulation. Their beſt and ſhorteſt Way will be to retire, and return to their own Country.

Theſe Reflections upon the Diſputes between the learned Men of *France*, have hindered me from mentioning two other Sects to thee, which I deſigned to compare to that of *Lao-Kium* and to that of *Foe*. This Parallel I reſerve for the next Letter which I ſhall write to thee. I am in pain for the Health of our Friend *Choang*; I don't hear any thing from him; pray tell me, whether he has wrote to thee, ſince he arrived at *Iſpahan*. As ſoon as I hear from *Tiao*, I will let thee know. I know not whether he will be as well pleaſed with his Voyage

to *Muſcovy*, as I am with that I have made to *Paris*.

Farewel.

LETTER IX.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

IN my Opinion, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, the Sect of the *Lao-tſe* is much like to that of the Convulſionaries of *Paris*. We will firſt examine the former, and then proceed to the latter. *Lao-Kium* was the Head and Founder of this Sect. This Philoſopher, or rather this Dreamer, eſtabliſhed a Moral as dangerous, as that of *Confucius* * was good, plain, and natural: Yet by giving his Sentiments ſo pernicious to the Public Good, and to Society, an Air of Auſterity, and covering them with a Veil of Hypocriſy, he got them received. He aſſerted, that it was ridiculous for a Man to embark in great Undertakings, to torment himſelf for the ſake of attaining to Honours, and to ſacrifice his Tranquillity to the Deſire of gratifying his Paſſions.

Theſe Arguments at firſt ſight ſeem very judicious; but they are diſcover'd to be falſe and criminal, when one makes a thorough Inquiry what Direction he that uſes them gives for acquiring thoſe

* *Lao-Kium* and *Confucius* lived at the ſame time.

moral

moral Virtues. He pretends, that a Man ought to approach as near as he can to Annihilation; that if poſſible, he muſt totally forget his Exiſtence, and that to ceaſe to be unhappy is to ceaſe to think. Don't theſe Principles deſtroy all the Foundations of civil Society; don't they break all the Bands of it in Pieces? If Men believ'd they could be happy no longer than while they remain'd in a perfect State of Inaction, in tranquil Indolence, in ſhort, in a kind of Annihilation, what would become of the moſt-flouriſhing States and Republics?

The Doctrines of *Lao-Kium's* Religion are as blameable as thoſe of his Moral; for they eſtabliſh the wildeſt Extravagancies as evident Truths. This Doctor will have it, that a Vacuum and Nothing are the Principles of all things: He ſays, that there are Genii, or Spirits, without number, that preſide over all human Events; and enjoins a Worſhip to be paid to all thoſe imaginary Deities. His Diſciples, blinded by his Promiſes, are infatuated with the Philoſopher's Stone, and talk of nothing but of an Eſſence which renders Men immortal, and may be compoſed by the Help of Spirits. In order to ſee the Ridiculouſneſs of thoſe Viſions, and fooliſh Hopes, one need only attend to what happened to *Lao-Kium* himſelf; for he dy'd, as well as other Men, notwithſtanding the Knowledge he pretended to have of that Elixir which procured Immortality.

In the very Life and Death of *Lao-Kium*, I find very ſtrong Weapons to combat his Adherents, which ſerve me in like manner to prove that his Way of thinking was quite contrary to the Principles which he laid down. He was for renouncing all manner of Dignities, for avoiding Buſineſs of all ſorts, for purſuing a State of Inaction, and yet, of all Men, he was the moſt ambitious. He pretended, that

his Disciples by studying his Doctrine would attain to the Secret of becoming Immortal, and yet himself underwent the common Laws of Nature. Must not a Man be stark-blind, to give Credit to the Promises of a Person who plainly gives the Lye to them by his Actions?

When I was at *Pekin*, I could not help lamenting to see how much the Followers of this Impostor were prepossessed in favour of the Predictions of those pretended Diviners, whom they treat with so much Respect, and believe to be so well grounded in the Doctrine of their Master, and the Knowledge of Futurity. I was sorry for the Folly of certain People that I saw were the Dupes of those Impostors; who, after having made strange Grimaces of the Face, and Contorsions of the Body, sacrifice a Hog, a Fish, or a Fowl to the Spirits by whom they pretend to be inspired.

I would fain know what Reason there is for that Sacrifice, and why 'tis composed of Animals that have so little Relation to one another. Perhaps, 'tis to the end that the different Spirits may find Meats agreeable to the Elements where they reside. The Fowl is undoubtedly for the aerial Spirits; the Fish for the watry Spirits; and the Hog for the terrestrial ones. Yet the latter seems to me to be the worst off; and I can't imagine how it came to pass, that the Diviners did not choose to regale him rather with an Ox or a Calf. The Present would have been much handsomer; besides, that the Flesh of a Hog causes the Leprosy, and that there is very great Danger that such Food will put the terrestrial Spirits out of Order. But to leave off Banter; Spirits, if there are any, do not eat, let the Diviners say what they will. This being so, one may object to them, what a Missionary-Jesuit said one day to a *Chinese* who thought that

that Heaven was pleaſed with the Sacrifices of Animals*, " If the Supreme Being is a Spirit, as you " ſay it is, if it can be neither ſeen nor felt, how can " what is incorporeal be nouriſhed by material " things, and how can what is corporeal ſerve for " the Maintenance and Preſervation of what is in- " corporeal, and what is mortal to the Duration of " what is immortal?" This Argument is convincing, and has been made uſe of by the Chriſtians, of all times, againſt their Adverſaries. 'Tis clear and ſo very obvious, that I wonder how it comes to paſs, that it has not preſerved Men from the Enormities into which they have fallen; but the Force of Prejudice commonly obſcures all the Rays of the Light of Nature; and 'tis in vain for Reaſon to ſeek for Audience in a Heart where Superſtition is predominant.

How can the Followers of *Lao-Kium* be ever undeceived by the Objections made to them, ſince they are not convinced of their Error by the fooliſh Circumſtances and extravagant Stories that are related in the Life of their Maſter? The plaineſt Detail of his Hiſtory is ſufficient to caſt an eternal Ridicule upon his Doctrine. He was born near the City of *Lin-Pao*, towards the Cloſe of the Dynaſtie of the *Tcheous*. His Father, a meer Peaſant, was obliged to ſerve as a Labourer for his Livelihood, and he followed that painful and miſerable Employment till he was ſeventy Years of Age. His Po-

* *Arnobius* made uſe of this very Argument againſt the ancient *Pagans*. *Sed ſi Deus (ut dicitur) nullius eſt Corporis, omniſque eſt incontiguus tactu, qui fieri poteſt ut corporalibus rebus nutriatur incorporeum, quod mortale eſt, ut immortale ſuſtineat, ſubdatque ſalutem rei quam contingere nequeat, & motus ſubminiſtrare vitales.* Arnob. lib. vii. p. 126.

verty obliged him to Celibacy, till being tired with living a Batchelor for the Space of fourteen Luſtres, he married a Countrywoman, of about forty Years of Age: But by Misfortune, the prolific Virtue was quite extinct in him, ſo that he was fain to content himſelf with ſipping the Pleaſures of Matrimony, without reaping the Fruits of it. His Wife, however, ſupply'd that Defect, for ſhe conceived by the Operation of Heaven. One day, as ſhe was all alone, in a ſolitary Place, a vivifying Virtue of Heaven and Earth, made Amends for the Infirmity of a Husband of threeſcore and ten. An Infant conceived in a manner ſo miraculous, was to be faſhion'd and born in a manner different from others, and it remained fourſcore Years in its Mother's Womb; ſo that this Woman, who was forty and upwards when ſhe conceived him, was in her hundred and twentieth when ſhe brought him into the World. A Pregnancy of ſuch a tedious Continuance muſt be very troubleſome to her; and the Maſter of the Houſe, in which ſhe was a Servant, being uneaſy to ſee that ſhe carried her great Belly ſo many Years, and ſuſpecting her, perhaps, to have a Dropſy, turned her away, when ſhe was forc'd to wander about the Country, from one Village to another, to beg Charity. At length ſhe ſtopp'd one Day under a Plum-tree, where ſhe was deliver'd of a Son; the Hair of whoſe Head and Eye-brows was quite grey, which was very natural, ſince an Infant of fourſcore Years old might very well reſemble old Men. As this Woman did not know the Name of her Husband's Family, and only knew its Surname, ſhe gave her Son *Lao-Kium*, the Name of the Tree under which he was born; and perceiving afterwards that he had very long Ears, ſhe added a ſecond Appellation to the former, and call'd

him

him the *Long Ear'd Plumb-tree* *; but the common People not thinking the Name suitable to an Infant of fourscore, and seeing him moreover quite grey, called him the *Old Infant* †.

When *Lao-Kium* was arrived at a certain Age, he was made Librarian to an Emperor of the Dynastry of the *Tcheous*; but foreseeing that this Family would not remain long upon the Throne, and perceiving its approaching Decay, he bravely mounted a black Cow, and rode to the Entrance of a gloomy Valley; where he died some time after, and was buried at *Ou*; in which Place his Tomb is still to be seen.

Is it possible, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, to invent a Fable so childish and ridiculous, and must not our Countrymen, who have embraced the Sect of the *Lao-tses*, be the blindest of all Mankind? For, tho' their Master *Lao-Kium* dy'd, was buried, and his Tomb is still in being; yet they pretend, that he knew the Secret of rendering Men immortal. He could not protect the Dynasty of the *Tcheous*, nor preserve that Royal Family from Misfortunes while he lived; and, now he is no more, he is said to be capable of operating the greatest Things. What Folly, what Extravagance is this! Who would believe that such Absurdities would ever have found many zealous Advocates? Yet that they have is but too true; and Mankind, which is always inclin'd to embrace what has the Air of the Marvellous, are fonder of monstrous Opinions than of such Sentiments as are plain and conformable to the Principles of Reason. This Sect has had, and still has, Admirers, not only among the mean Vulgar, but even among the Grandees; and we have known Mandarins that have been infatuated

* *Ly-eul* in the *Chinese*. † *Lao-tse* in the *Chinese*.

with all the Chimerical Hopes with which *Lao-Kium*'s Disciples have fed them. Those Lords paid dear for little Images representing the Spirits that procured Immortality, cur'd all Distempers, or preserv'd from all Dangers. The Emperor *Vouti* himself was bubbled by these Quacks. He took several Draughts of the pretended Liquor of Immortality; but he found for all that, he was still as mortal as ever; and what was worse for him was, that he was not undeceived till he was on the Point of expiring.

The Infatuation of the *Chinese* can only be excused by the Fondness which certain *Frenchmen* discover for Superstitions and Extravagancies that are equally ridiculous. There was a Man here called *Paris*, who is the *Lao-Kium* of the *Parisians*. I will inform thee of his Life, and of the Opinions of his Followers, in my next Letter; by which thou wilt see there are as many Fools among the *French*, as among our Countrymen.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN, *Farewel.*

LETTER

LETTER X.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

IN my laſt, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I ran over the Follies of *Lao-Kium*'s Sect; we will now ſee what the *French* Convulſionaries are, who own one *Paris* for their Head. This was a Demi-Prieſt; for you muſt know the *European* Eccleſiaſtics muſt paſs thro' ſeveral Degrees, before they attain to the Prieſthood. We ſee none of theſe Demi-Prieſts among the Miſſionaries at *China*, becauſe their Power is ſo much circumſcrib'd that they cannot work the chief Myſteries of Chriſtianity, and would be of no Service to it. Theſe they call *Deacons*. This *Paris* therefore can't be deem'd as a true Prieſt; yet his Diſciples exalt him, not only above the common Pontiffs, but even above the Biſhop of *Rome*, the Prince, and the Head of all the Chriſtians. While he liv'd, he was but juſt known to ſome Women in his Neighbourhood, and ſome of the Dregs of the People, to whom he read the Canonical Books of the *Europeans*. He exclaimed very much againſt an Order of the *Roman* Pontiff, which was vehemently oppoſed by certain *French* Doctors, and he had embraced their Party, tho' without knowing why; for he was very ignorant. It may be ſaid, that he contended for Opi-

nions which he knew nothing of; the Love of Novelty, and a natural Byaſs to Fanaticiſm, having been of much more Efficacy than Reaſon, to determine his Choice in favour of the Party he had embraced. His Manners were very pure; but his Moral was pernicious to Society: His Diſcourſe was upon nothing but the renouncing of every thing capable of giving Men Pleaſure, and he reduced every thing to a certain State of Perfection, which being never to be attained to amongſt Mankind, can be of no Profit to them in their Conduct, and the Direction of their Actions. This raiſing of the Heart to Heaven, this abſolute Contempt of worldly Things, ſo much boaſted of by the *Janſeniſts*, is very much like that Vacuum, that Repoſe, that Indolence of *Lao-Kium*'s Sectaries. The former, under Pretence of reducing every thing to Religion, ruin Society, and break the Bands of it: The latter, under Pretence of making Men happy, by delivering them from all Care, expoſe them to all the Misfortunes which would ſink a Republic, where every body would ſhun Work, and where there would be no Husbandman, nor Tradeſman, nor Judge, nor Soldier. If all the *Chineſe* were of *Lao-Kium*'s Opinion, what would become of *China*? 'Twould be a Deſert peopled with Bears and Tygers; and if the *French* were all like the Deacon *Paris*, their Country would have none but Fools in it; inſomuch, that it would be even more eaſy to find a Parrot, or a Canary-bird, in the Foreſts of *Lapland*, than a wiſe Man in this Kingdom.

The *Partiſans* of the fanatic Deacon have exactly followed his Precepts; nay, have extended them farther than he could have believed: For he was hardly in his Coffin, but they were for placing him in the Rank of the Demi-Gods. They eſtabliſh'd a Form of Worſhip to him, and gave out,

that

that all who did not acknowledge the Grandure and Glory which he enjoy'd in Heaven, would be punish'd with the most cruel Misfortunes. In order to prove their Words by Deeds, and to give the greater Weight to what they say, they have had Recourse to the same Grimaces as the Followers of *Lao-Kium*, who pretend to maintain a private Correspondence with Spirits, draw strange Figures upon Paper, and make a frightful Noise with Kettles, and little Drums. The Convulsionaries have Fits of Madness; some leap and dance, without Rule and Cadence; others throw themselves flat along, and tumble upon the Floor: There are some that eat burning Coals, others swallow Flints; and in short, play all the Tricks of Legerdemain we see practised by the most crafty Jugglers; and 'tis all look'd upon as authentic Miracles. When they play these Tricks, and act these Extravagancies, they pretend that Heaven reveals the Secrets of Hearts to them, and grants them the Gift of Prophecy.

Thus, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, thou hast a perfect Model of *Lao-Kium*'s Followers. These Convulsionaries, that they may be like the *Chinese* Impostors in every thing, ascribe, like them, a great Virtue to certain Images: They every where vend that of their Patriarch *Paris*, which they affirm, is a Protection from the most imminent Dangers, that it scatters Plenty in all Houses where 'tis kept; and there is not one of the Sect of Convulsionaries but has his Image at his Bed's Head.

As senseless as this Sect of the Convulsionaries is, yet it makes a considerable Progress in the Kingdom, and especially at *Paris*. The Vulgar, who are every where alike credulous, and easily deceived, especially when a proper Application is made of what is Marvellous, greedily swallow for evident Truths and glaring Miracles, all the Follies and

Extravagancies of certain Knaves who make it their Buſineſs to deceive them, and of certain Fanatics who were themſelves the firſt Dupes of their own Credulity. It has even happened, that Perſons of Diſtinction have ſuffered themſelves to be ſeduced, and have fallen into the Snare laid to entrap them. The Deſire of Health and long Life has the ſame Effect upon them, as the Hopes of Immortality have upon certain *Chineſe* Mandarins. As the latter are eager in the Purſuit of the pretended Elixir of Immortality which is promiſed by the Followers of *Lao-Kium*, ſo the others perform nine Days Devotion at the Grave of the Deacon *Paris*, of which they eat the Earth, and drink the Water, yet all this has no more Effect than the Elixir of *Lao-Kium*; for the two Remedies are of equal Virtue.

A certain Princeſs, who, in hopes of recovering her Eye-ſight, had been at *Paris*'s Tomb, and taken ſeveral Cordial Potions, compoſed of the pureſt Clods of the ſaid Tomb, had the Fate of the Emperor *Vouti*; and all the Amends ſhe had for her Trouble and Pains, was to find that her Credulity had been deceived.

Another Lady of Diſtinction, a great Bigot to the Deacon *Paris*, brought with her to *Holland* from *France*, a little Cart-load of the precious Earth of his Tomb, which ſhe diſtributed to all that thought it would do them good. The Apothecaries and Druggiſts of the Country were alarm'd at this new Remedy, and were going to appeal to the Magiſtrates for the Maintenance and Preſervation of Rhubarb, Sena, and Caſſia; but the *Pariſian Opiate*, inſtead of curing thoſe who made uſe of it, made ſeveral worſe than they were before, and left a Load upon their Stomachs, as indeed they might well expect from ſwallowing a Clod

Clod of Earth. What is odd in the Story of this Lady, is, that notwithſtanding the Quantity of the Antidote which ſhe carried with her againſt all the Ailments both of Body and Soul, ſhe could not help falling in Love with her own Valet de Chambre to diſtraction; and (what was worſe) privately marrying him. She was very good natured after this, to have ſuch an Opinion of the Earth of *Paris*'s Tomb, ſince above two hundred Weight of it was not enough to hinder her from committing the greateſt Folly in the World. So far was ſhe from making thoſe Reflections, that when ſhe was obliged, by Reaſon of her Conduct, to depart the Kingdom, ſhe always carried her dear Earth about her, and on her Death-bed ordered it to be caſt into her Grave. If there was a Poſſibility for old Women to marry again, after they were dead, to handſome and vigorous Footmen, the precious Earth would be of no more avail in the other World than in this.

The Women are not the only Dupes to the Extravagancies of the Convulſionaries; for ſeveral Men of Rank of all Claſſes, look upon them as the Effects of the Divine Wiſdom, which by means thereof, is inclined to manifeſt itſelf to the Eyes of Unbelievers

A Magiſtrate of the * firſt Tribunal in the Kingdom, was baniſhed not long ago, for aſſerting the Truth of the Miracles of the Deacon *Paris*, and he wrote a Book upon the Subject, which he was ſo bold as to preſent to his Sovereign.

An old Officer † who has had many a Wound in his Time, is himſelf become a Convulſionary. He diſtinguiſhed himſelf heretofore both by his Valour and his Genius, and he had publiſhed a

* *M. de Montgeron.* † The Chevalier *Folard.*

very

very excellent Work; but all on a ſudden, he became more credulous and madder than the moſt ſilly and the moſt ignorant Convulſionary. What an Inſtance is this of human Frailty, and of the Snares that Perſons are liable to fall into, who ſeem to deſerve moſt of our Eſteem! Is it a Wonder after this, if the ſilly Vulgar are eaſily ſeduced, when we ſee Men, ſuch as this Magiſtrate and this Officer, become the principal Followers of the moſt ſcandalous Fanaticiſm? For don't imagine, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that there is one of all the pretended Miracles wrought by the Convulſionaries, that can make any Impreſſion upon the Mind of a Man that is in his right Senſes. The Dead are not brought again to Life; the Deaf are not reſtored to their Hearing, nor the Blind to their Sight; but the Cures that are wrought are of Diſtempers that People have laboured under for ſeveral Years, and that have been in the Hands of Phyſicians; ſo that 'tis viſible, that either Nature or Art have operated what is aſcribed to a Miracle.

But granting, for Argument ſake only, that ſome ſingular Cure had been effected by the Interceſſion of the Deacon *Paris*, who does not ſee, if he gives ever ſo little Attention, that meer Imagination is ſufficient to produce ſuch an Event? Don't we know the Power it has over the Body, and that it acts ſometimes with ſo much Force, that it brings forth the moſt extraordinary Effects? Beſides, Nature operates by a hundred different ways alike unknown to us, and ſhall we ſay nevertheleſs, that all the Conſequences are Miracles? Yet this is the Argument of almoſt all thoſe whoſe Heads are full of Prodigies, and who in all Events admit of a Marvellous, which has no Place among the Philoſophers, and eſpecially ſuch, as like our modern Doctors, think that every thing is regulated in Nature;

Nature, and that nothing can disturb the Order or Laws of it, there being no supernatural Cause, no Being which has a Power to oppose the mutual Concurrence of the *Ly* with Matter, whose close Union is productive, not only of the Elements, but also of all the different Figures and Modifications which those Elements form.

What the old *Roman* said, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is the best Answer that can be given to such as will have it that there is something of the Marvellous and the Divine, in things which to them appear extraordinary *. " All Events which to us " seem the most supernatural, must needs have " their Cause in Nature, because 'tis Nature that " produces every thing, and what seems to us to " be against Custom, is nevertheless not against " Nature. In Nature therefore, we must seek for " the Reason of the Prodigies which astonish us. " If we don't find it out, we can only blame our " Ignorance; for we may depend on't it must be " there, and to it we must therefore always ascribe " it. Then neither Earthquakes, nor the rending " of the Heavens, nor Showers of Stones or Blood, " nor the Shooting of the Stars, nor the various " Colours of the Planets will amaze us.'

* *Quidquid oritur, qualecunque est, causam habeat a naturâ necesse est; ut etiam si præter consuetudinem extiterit, præter naturam tamen non possit existere. Causam igitur investigato in re novâ atque admirabili, si potes. Si nullam reperias, illud tamen exploratum habeto, nihil fieri potuisse sine causâ, eumque errorem quem tibi rei novitas attulerit, naturæ ratione depellito; ita te nec terræ fremitus, nec cæli discessus, nec lapideus aut sanguineus imber, nec trajectio stellæ, nec faces visæ terrebunt.* Cic. de Divin. lib. 1.

It were to be wiſhed, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, for the Good of *China* and *France*, that the Adherents of *Lao-Kium*, and thoſe of the Deacon *Paris*, did but argue as ſenſibly as this wiſe *Roman*.

Farewel.

LETTER XI.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

THAT thou may'ſt have a juſt Idea of all the Sects in *France*, it remains for me to give thee ſome Account of the Sect of Moliniſts, which I think may be compared, as I have already told thee, to the Sect of *Foe*; whoſe Inſtitution, Increaſe, and Tenets, we will juſt glance over, and then inquire into the Inſtitution, Progreſs, *&c.* of the *French* Sect.

The Emperor *Mingti* having dream't a Dream which put him in mind that *Confucius* often ſaid, the *Moſt Holy* would be found in the Weſt, ſent Ambaſſors to the *Indies*, who thinking they had found that Saint in *Foe*, or rather *Foe*'s Image, brought it with them to *China*, and therewith all the Stories told about him by the *Indians*, which according to Cuſtom, quickly found Credit with the *Chineſe* Vulgar.

The

The Hiſtory of *Lao-Kium* is hardly more ridiculous than the Account of this *Foe*. They ſay that he was born in *Chung-tien-cho*, and that he was the Son of a Sovereign of that Part of *India*. When his Mother conceived him, ſhe dreamed that ſhe had ſwallowed an Elephant. So large a Morſel was of hard Digeſtion, and portended the enormous Stature of *Foe*, who really could not have been brought into the World, if it had not coſt that Princeſs her Life; for there was a Neceſſity of opening her Side to favour the Child's Birth. He had ſcarce ſeen the Light, but inſtead of crying and bawling like other Infants, he took ſeven Steps, and lifting one Hand towards the Heavens, and letting the other fall towards the Earth, he ſaid with a ſtrong maſculine Voice, *There's none but myſelf that deſerves to be adored in Heaven above, and on Earth beneath.*

No wonder that a God, who at his Birth gave ſuch ſignal Proofs of his Greatneſs, ſhould increaſe in Strengh and Power in Proportion as he advanced in Age; and when he was ſeventeen Years old, he married three Wives. Neither one nor two were enough; a God who condeſcends to take the Pleaſures of feeble Mortals, is not bound by the common Rule. One ſhould be apt to ſuſpect, however, that the Deities may be tired and quite ſpent like Men; for two Years after his Marriage, *Foe* quitted his Wives, having had by one of them a Child called *Mo-heoulo*; but he had no more Regard for this Son than for his Wives, and retiring at nineteen Years of Age into Solitude, there to ſtudy Philoſophy under four able Maſters, he forgot that he had been either Father or Husband; wherein, according to my Opinion, and that of all Men of Learning, he gave a very pernicious Example to Society. His Followers

lowers will say perhaps in his Excuse, that he was not then intirely deify'd; for they pretend that he was not fully penetrated with the Divinity, and did not become a *Foe* or Pagode, till he was thirty Years of Age: But if this be so, how could *Foe* say at his Birth, *There's none but me that deserves to be adored in Heaven above, or on Earth beneath*, because there was another Deity more powerful than he, and by whose Assistance he himself was made divine? It must therefore be owned, either that *Foe* did not speak at his Birth, or that if he spoke, he lied: From whence I infer, that some Fables told of him deserve no Credit, and that they all ought to be rejected, since I discover the Falshood of one, which they look upon as authentic History. If on the other Hand, *Foe* did speak, he lied as soon as he made use of Speech; and I ought to be careful how I trust so impudent a Liar.

In the Birth of *Foe*, I meet with another Particular, which surely is enough to open the Eyes of the *Chinese* who are so blind as to adhere to his Sect, and to embrace its Opinions. How could *Foe*, who was not able to save his own Mother, protect Persons that have nothing of relation to him? What will he do more for Strangers than for her who gave him Birth? And will the Presents that are offered to those Images, or to the Bonzes who serve them, have more Power over him than the Tyes of Blood? If this be the Case, he is an infamous Deity, and more contemptible than the most selfish and the most covetous Farmer of the Revenue.

If the Vulgar could be enlightened by solid Arguments, that Impostor's Sect would have been quite abolished and destroyed in *China* long ago; but Superstition is more powerful than the most con-

convincing Arguments. I don't believe that there can be a better Discovery of the Tricks of *Foe*, than what we find has been made in these latter Times by the learned *Tchin* in a Dialogue where he declares his Opinion of the Origin of the World. Thou knowest that this Philosopher joins with me in the Sentiments of the modern Commentators, and that he differs from thee and the ancient Interpreters in his Opinion, that not only the Formation, but also the Continuance of the Order and Regularity of the Universe may be explained only by material Causes. He unravels the Impostures of *Foe*, and ridicules his Opinions after this manner. "The *Foe*, *says he*, * is a visionary, "who pretended to render himself immortal. Ac- "cording to him the whole World is but a Va- "cuum, and there is nothing real. In Conformity "to this fine Principle, he would have nothing "thought of; he would have the Heart be reduced "to a meer Vacuum, that is to say, that it be void "of all Affection; and that a Man should forget "himself to such a Degree, as if he did not exist. "We have Eyes and Ears, and yet we must not "see nor hear; those Organs ought to be void of "every Object, or else they cannot be in a per- "fect State. We have a Mouth, Hands and Feet, "and yet all those Members must be inactive. "His grand Pretence is, that his admirable Ternary "of *Tsing*, *Ki*, and *Chin*, i. e. the fine, subtle, spi- "ritual, comes to its greatest Perfection, when "by uniting they be made one. As to the Soul, "its Duration, *says he*, is infinite, and it never "dyes.

* I make use of the Translation of *Pere Halde* the Jesuit, who translated this *Chinese* Piece, and has added several Notes to it. See his History of *China*.

"Don't

" Don't you ſee that this fine Doctrine of Self-
" Annihilation, of univerſal Deſtruction, ends at
" laſt in aſpiring after a chimerical Immortality,
" and in deſiring what cannot be obtained? They
" are for taking this vivifiying Virtue from Heaven
" by Force; and appropriating it to themſelves,
" they refuſe to reſtore it another day to Heaven
" and Earth, and by that means they propoſe to
" arrive at the pure Vacuum.

" But perhaps, *continues he*, you don't know
" the Hiſtory of this Viſionary. His Mother in
" a Dream ſaw a great White Elephant, and at
" the ſame Inſtant perceived ſhe was with Child.
" Her Fruit throve every Day conſiderably, and
" at length came out of the Mother's Womb by
" tearing up her Intrails, and taking away the Life
" of the Woman from whom he had juſt received
" it. In this manner did that Monſter come to
" Light. Ought not the Creature that was to
" turn every thing in Nature topſy-turvy, to be
" numbered among the Plagues of Mankind? Do
" the idolatrous People faſt, make Proceſſions,
" and perform a hundred things of that Sort, with a
" View to obtain all manner of Happineſs for their
" Mothers, becauſe he killed his Mother at his
" Birth? Is it to be imagined that this *Foe* who
" could not ſave his own Mother, can have the
" Power to protect the Mother of any other?

" *We will proceed.* He lived in one of thoſe
" Kingdoms that are to the Weſt of this Empire,
" where he was at one and the ſame Time So-
" vereign in Temporals and Spirituals, King, and
" Head of his Religion. He had a Queen and
" a Concubine both very beautiful, and he made
" them both Divinities. His Kingdom abounded
" in Gold, Silver, Merchandiſe, Proviſions, and
" eſpecially in precious Stones; but tho' it was

rich

" rich and fruitful, it was ſmall, and its Inhabitants " had neither Strength nor Courage. On the con- " trary, the People of the ſeveral Kingdoms with " which it was encompaſſed were robuſt, active, " and breathed nought but Blood and Slaughter. " Conſequently the Dominions of *Foe* were liable " to frequent Incurſions.

" Being tired out with ſo many Inſults which " he could not reſiſt, he abdicated his Kingdom, " and embraced a ſolitary Life. He afterwards " exhorted the People to Virtue, and gave out the " Doctrine of the *Metempſychoſis*, which he had " invented by making Souls paſs and repaſs from " one Body to another, preſerving a certain Order " nevertheleſs by which Virtue was rewarded and " Vice puniſhed. He infatuated the neighbouring " People with theſe fooliſh Imaginations. His " Deſign was to intimidate his Perſecutors, and to " perſuade them that if they continued the Ravages " which they made upon his Territories, they " ſhould be changed after this Life into Dogs, " Horſes, and even into wild Beaſts.

" For twelve Years that he took the Pains to " propagate his Doctrine, he carried about with " him in his Retinue a prodigious Rabble of ig- " norant Wretches whoſe Brains he had turned; and " with their Aſſiſtance he re-aſcended the Throne, " became very powerful, and marrying again he " had a numerous Iſſue. Such was the Fruit of " his Stratagems, and while he preached up to his " Diſciples the Emptyneſs of this World's Goods, " he eagerly coveted them, and procured himſelf " as great a Share of them as he poſſibly could.

" But don't imagine that *Foe*'s Doctrine is ex- " cellent becauſe it has ſpread ſo far in this Em- " pire; it has only gained Credit becauſe the Doc- " trine of our ancient Sages was in a manner ex-

" tinct.

" extinct. Ignorance and Corruption of the Heart " have opened a Way to the groſſeſt Errors; the " admirable Leſſons of the *Yaos*, the *Chuns*, and " of *Confucius* have been neglected, and the Re- " ligion of *Foe* has been the only Favourite. This " Sect only preſcribes certain vain Prayers for ob- " taining Happineſs, which is a very eaſy matter; " whereas our Sages exhort to the Conqueſt of the " Paſſions, the Regulation of the Deſires, and the " Diſcharge of all Duties, which is much more " difficult to be put in Practice."

All the Sects, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, who will flatter the Paſſions and indulge Men with the Gratification of their moſt criminal Deſires, on the Obſervation of certain pious Formalities which blot out the greateſt Tranſgreſſions, will be eagerly received by the People, as is wiſely remarked by that Philoſopher. Nothing is ſo convenient for People that don't love Virtue, as a Religion that ſtifles Remorſe by the Hopes which it gives of a Pardon for the moſt enormous Crimes. For tho' it ſeems at firſt View that the *Bonzes*, the Diſciples and Prieſts of *Foe* impoſe a Puniſhment after Death upon thoſe who ſhall have committed Crimes; tho' they oblige them to ſuffer a long Series of Tranſmigrations, and to paſs ſucceſſively from the Body of a Rat to that of a Mule, from that of a Mule to that of a Poſt-Horſe; all theſe different Tranſmigrations vaniſh when once an Offering is made to the *Bonzes*, and Monaſteries and Temples are built for them. There are Pilgrimages which cancel all Sins, and Images which inſure eternal Felicity in the other World. 'Tis true, all theſe Things don't operate *gratis*, and that ſome Money muſt always be diſburſed, but where is the Man that would grudge to ſacrifice a ſmall Sum for

the

the Privilege of gratifying all his Paſſions with Impunity?

The *Bonzes*, who had their own Intereſt in view by eſtabliſhing the ridiculous Doctrine of the *Metempſychoſis*, ſtudy'd to find out Expedients to render it more or leſs diſagreeable, according as they found their Account by it. They are ſo greedy of Gold and Silver, that there is no Part which they don't play to amaſs it; they put on all manner of Forms, inſomuch that it may be ſaid, that the *Metempſychoſis* exiſts real among them. As they are generally deſcended from the meaneſt of the People, they affect among the great Men ſuch good Nature, Complaiſance, ſuch Humility, as in ſpite of the Contemptibleneſs of their Birth, gives them Acceſs to the greateſt Families. They encourage thoſe who fear what will be their Condition after Death, and they promiſe them the Protection of their God *Foe*. They make a Preſent of his Image to the devout Women, and order them to hang it about their Necks, as a Preſervative againſt the Dangers of this Life, and againſt the Pains of the other. They employ other Methods to gain the Admiration of the Populace, and they make a Shew of themſelves by ſevere Penances, which they are ſure to be handſomly paid for. Some of them faſten great Chains to their Necks, which they drag about the Streets from Door to Door, begging Alms, and always preaching up that the giving of them is the beſt Way to buy off Sins. Sometimes they beat their Heads againſt a great Stone, and affect above all Things to be ſtrict Faſters. So much Oſtentation, tho' it makes Men of Learning and Philoſophers look upon the *Bonzes* as dangerous Impoſtors, has its Effect however upon the Common People, and even

even upon the Minds of ſome ſuperſtitious Mandarins; for Superſtition extends its Prerogative over all Ranks, and the Throne itſelf is not exempt from it; conſequently we ſee that be the Sect of *Foe* ever ſo ridiculous, it has nevertheleſs found Friends at Court. The Emperor *Kao-Tſong* that he might entirely give himſelf up to it, abandoned the Empire to his Son, and became the Friend, the Companion, and even the Slave of the *Bonzes*. We ſhall ſee in my next Letter, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that the *French* have been hardly wiſer than the *Chineſe*, and that the Sect of Moliniſts has produced the ſame Conſequences amongſt them, as that of *Foe* has among our Countrymen.

Farewel.

LETTER XII.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

AS I began my laſt Letter with the Character of *Foe*, the chief of the Sect of the *Bonzes*, I ſhall begin this dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, with that of the Founder of the Moliniſt Sect.

Ignatius, of whom thou haſt ſo often heard the Jeſuits ſpeak, and whoſe Life written by one of his Diſciples thou haſt read, tho' 'tis

'tis very far from being true, and from what is ſaid of him here, is the Great Patriarch of the Moliniſts, which is the Name given in *France* to the Jeſuits, and to all the other Clergy and Laity that are ſtrenuouſly attached to them. This Man was born in *Spain*, and ſpent the firſt Years of his Life in the military Service. Being wounded at the Siege of the Citadel of *Pampeluna* by a Muſket-Ball, which broke his Shin-Bone, the Wound was never well cur'd, and his Leg being rendered deformed by a Bone which ſtuck out too much, *Ignatius*, who before thought no Legs ſo well ſhaped as his, could not bear this Deformity, and in ſpite of all that the Phyſicians and Surgeons could ſay, he himſelf cut the Bone to the quick, which was paying dear for the Pleaſure of wearing a tight Boot.

But this was not all that *Ignatius* did to prevent his wearing a wooden Leg. His Right Leg being contracted after his Wound, for fear of being a Cripple, he had an Iron Machine made and apply'd to it to lengthen it, which however notwithſtanding the Torture it put him to, did avail nothing, for that Leg was ſtill ſhorter than the other.

Ignatius in order to diſpel his Melancholy, and to mitigate his Torment to find himſelf a Cripple, called for ſome Books, and by chance they gave him one which contained the Hiſtory of the chief *European* Saints. This Book full of wonderful but fabulous Stories, warmed his Imagination, which being naturally very ſtrong, was very ready to receive the Objects that were offered to it, were they ever ſo whimſical. On a ſudden, *Ignatius* thought no more of his Leg nor his Wound; for the fabulous Actions of the *European* Saints engroſſed all his Thoughts. One while, like St. *Polycrone*, he looked about for the Root of ſome great

Oak in order to lay upon his Shoulders while he prayed; the next Moment he called for Cords, to imitate the frowzy St. *Dominic*, who gave himself 300,000 Scourges every Week; for *Ignatius* already thought that as his Heart had all the Zeal of those *Nazarene* Saints, his Shoulders and his Buttocks must also be as callous as theirs.

All these Follies were as yet existing only in Imagination without being realis'd, and *Ignatius* for a while kept his extravagant Notions to himself, 'till on a sudden he abandoned himself in publick to his irregular Imagination, and resolved to ramble abroad: And in spite of his Brother's Remonstrances, he mounted a Mule, stole away from him, and steered his Course for a Monastery: Meeting a *Mahometan* Negro by the way, he insisted on his fighting with him, or on his confessing that he was mistaken in his Religion; but the Moor would do neither the one nor the other; and in order to get clear of such a Madman he fled.

It looked as if this first Action of *Ignatius* was a Presage of what he would do one Day, and of the Principles upon which he would establish the Opinions that he would make his Followers receive. Violence and Compulsion are the two principal Maxims of the Jesuits. Oh! how different are they in *Europe*, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, from what they affect to appear in *China!*

After *Ignatius* had rambled all over *Spain* with one Shoe on and t'other off, playing every now and then some extravagant Prank or other, and being apprehended in some Towns on Account of his Follies and carried before the Judges, he came to *Paris* to learn the Rudiments of the *Latin* Tongue when he was thirty three Years of Age. Forasmuch as, under Pretence of inspiring young Scholars with the Love of a Christian Life, he induc'd them to give away

away all their Subſtance, and to live like Beggars, the Profeſſors of the College intended to give him the Laſh, but he eſcap'd that Puniſhment by making the beſt Excuſe he could; and whether they were aſham'd to treat a Man of *Ignatius*'s Age like a Child, or whether they were convinc'd by his Arguments, he was not whipp'd, and thereby loſt an Opportunity of taſting ſome of thoſe Stripes for which he ſo much envied the naſty St. *Dominic*.

Thou can'ſt not imagine, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, how *Ignatius* long'd for a Whipping-Bout. All his Diſciples*, who have wrote in theſe latter Days, agree that he earneſtly deſir'd his Magiſtrates to treat him in this Reſpect, notwithſtanding his advanc'd Age, like the meaneſt School-Boy. *Ignatius*, having, after a great Deal of Pains, acquir'd a tolerable Knowledge of the *Latin* Tongue, and pick'd up ſome Alms, travell'd a great Way farther, and even went to *Egypt* to ſee *Jeruſalem*; where he play'd ſuch fooliſh Pranks, as obliged the Chiefs of the Chriſtians who reſide there to order him to be gone.

The Extravagancies of *Ignatius* were more affected than natural. His extraordinary Zeal for Devotion was the Cloak for his boundleſs Ambition; and though his Underſtanding had been impair'd at firſt, either by his different Way of Life, or by what he had ſuffer'd in his Sickneſs, yet in Proceſs of Time, his Vanity and Ambition to be

* *Ab eo etiam atque etiam petit, ut ſe pro puero habent, verberibus graviter accipiat, ſic ubi minus attentum aut diligentem reprehenderit. Ribadeneira* in the Life of *Ignatius*, Lib. I. cap. xiii. *Petere & rogare ut ab ſe quotidie, non minus quam à cæteris penſum exigat; ceſſantem quaſi quemlibet unum è grege puerorum, arbitratu ſuo & verbis & plagis accipiat. Maffei Ignatius*'s Life, Lib. I. cap. xvi.

the Head of a venerable Sect were the only Motives of his Conduct. He ſt ll continued to behave in the ſame Manner, becauſe he was ſenſible that his pious Follies acquir'd him the Eſteem and Admiration of the Populace. After he had travell'd to *Paris*, the Number of his Diſciples increaſed very much. The firſt Law he impos'd upon them, was to vow a blind Obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff of *Rome*, and to ſubmit themſelves intirely to his own Orders and theirs, who ſhould be their Superiors hereafter. Theſe two Points were as eſſential as political. By the firſt he ſecur'd the Protection of the Court of *Rome* to his Diſciples for ever, and by the ſecond he eſtabliſhed good Order in the Company, as he term'd it, which is now call'd the *Society of the Jeſuits*. He reflected alſo by what he had ſeen when he was in the Service, that Subordination was the Life and Soul of an Army, and that no Government could be laſting if the Heads had not a Power to make themſelves obey'd. This it was determin'd him to eſtabliſh that intire Dependence on the Superiors, from which the Order afterwards reap'd ſo many Advantages.

After having taken a World of Care and Pains to eſtabliſh his Sect, *Ignatius* died. His Diſciples had Thoughts at firſt of deifying him, as the *Chineſe* did their Maſter *Foe*; but for as much as all the Actions of *Ignatius* were yet freſh in Memory, and while many People thought him a Madman, others reckon'd him a crafty Impoſtor, the Jeſuits were afraid to aſcribe the Operation of any Miracles to him, and even acknowledg'd that he had not wrought one, though they maintain'd that he was not therefore the leſs worthy of a Place among the ſubaltern Deities of the Chriſtians. In a few Years after they pull'd off the Mask; when ſome

some pretended that he had received a Book, which he had compos'd from one of the Celestial Spirits: * Others affirm'd, † that in repeating the Love Verses of a Pagan Poet, he had drove out unclean Spirits, and cur'd a Woman that was possess'd by pronouncing this Line;

Speluncam Dido, Dux & Trojanus eandem.

* *Baltasar Alvarez*, cap. xliii. *Deum hæc exercitia Sancto Patri nostro revelasse; imo per Gabrielem Archangelum non nemini fuisse à Deipara virgine significatum, se Patronam eorum, fundatricem, atque adjutricem fuisse, docuisseque Ignatium ut ea sic conciperet.* Sotwel, Biblioth. Societ. Jesu, p. 1. *i. e.* That God had reveal'd these Exercises to our Holy Father, and moreover that it was notify'd to all Mankind by *Gabriel* the Archangel on the Part of the Virgin Mother of God, that she was the Patroness, Foundress, and Assistant of those Exercises, and that she had taught *Ignatius* to have the same Conception.

† The Tradition says, That a certain Woman at *Rome*, being possess'd with a Devil, went to *Ignatius Loyola*, and cry'd out, *Thou alone can'st help me and deliver me*; and that then *Ignatius* recited that Verse of *Virgil*, *Speluncam* &c. upon which the Devil, that was in the Woman, threw her down, and went out crying, O Son *Loyola*, thou like a Lion compelledst me to go to the Infernal Den, but I beseech thee not to cast me into the Den everlasting. That after this, *Ignatius* said to him, *Go whither thou wilt so thou dost not possess Man any more*, and presently after the Devil went off with a great Noise. *Joan Christian. Fromman. de Fascinat.* Lib. III. Part IX. cap. iv. N°. 15. p. m. 949.

Some Writers maintain'd, that * only the Name of *Ignatius* written upon a Scrap of Paper did more Wonders than were work'd by the Legiſlator of the *Jews*; and others, that none but the Supreme

* Theſe were the four Propoſitions, which were laid before the *Sorbonne* by one *Fileſac*. I take them from a Book, which has been very well receiv'd by the Public. The firſt imported, " That *Ignatius*, " with his Name written upon Paper, perform'd more " Miracles than *Moſes*, and as many as the Apoſtles."

The ſecond, " That the Life of *Ignatius* was ſo " holy and ſo ſublime even in the Opinion of Hea- " ven, that none but the Popes, as St. *Peter*, none " but Empreſſes, as the Mother of God, and ſome " Sovereign Monarchs, as God the Father and his " Holy Son, had the Happineſs to ſee him."

The third, " That indeed the Founders of the Re- " ligious Orders were ſent in Favour of the Church " formerly, but that in theſe latter Times God had " ſpoke by his Son *Ignatius*, whom he had made " Heir of all Things, and to whom nothing was " wanting but that Honour, and by whom he alſo " made the Ages."

The fourth, " That the Martyr *Ignatius* had a " very ſingular Affection for the Holy Father and " Pope of *Rome*, as the lawful Succeſſor of *Jeſus* " *Chriſt* and his Vicar upon Earth."

Andrew du Val the famous Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, who was intirely devoted to the *Inighiſts*, endeavour'd to oppoſe the Cenſure of theſe Propoſitions, pretending that they were capable of a favourable Interpretation, and of a Catholic Senſe, but no Regard was had to his Oppoſition. The three firſt were condemn'd as *ſcandalous*, *erroneous*, *blaſphemous*, *impious*, *execrable*, *deteſtable*, *falſe*, and *manifeſtly heretical*. *Inigo*'s Life, *Tom.* II. *p.* 152.

God

God and *Mary* his Mother, the Sovereign Queen of Heaven, had the Happineſs to ſee *Ignatius*.

Thou muſt be ſenſible, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that ſuch Fables are every whit as abſurd as what the *Bonzes* tell of their God *Foe*; and the Learned *Frenchmen*, like the Learned *Chineſe*, were for oppoſing the Frauds and Impoſtures of the Jeſuits, juſt as the *Chineſe* vigorouſly oppoſed the Tricks of the *Bonzes*.

The Univerſity of *Paris* condemn'd the fabulous Expreſſions and Tales of thoſe Writers as Impieties equally falſe and deteſtable. One would have thought, that after ſuch a Blot caſt upon the Diſciples of *Ignatius*, they would have drop'd their Deſign to deify him; but ſo far from it, that they went through with it. Then did the Vulgar, who are always credulous and Lovers of Novelty, look upon *Ignatius* as one of the moſt powerful of the ſubaltern Deities. His Images were revered, bought up by his Votaries, and dearly ſold by his Diſciples, who affecting as much good Nature, Modeſty, and Humility as the *Bonzes*, did like them inſinuate themſelves into the beſt Families. They flatter'd the Great, pacify'd the Remorſe of ſuch as were terrify'd by the Thoughts of another Life, and aſſur'd them that their Maſter *Ignatius* would obtain the Pardon of their Sins, provided that they aſſiſted and protected his Diſciples. In ſhort they ſoon found as many Abettors in *Europe* as the *Bonzes* have in *China*. It was in vain that ſeveral illuſtrious Men of Learning ſtrove to ſtop the Courſe of their Proſperity; for thoſe artful Hypocrites employ'd the Credit which they had acquir'd to ſo good Purpoſe that they defeated their Enemies, whom they repreſented as dangerous Heretics, and by giving them the Name of *Janſeniſts* render'd them hateful to the Sovereign. They

caus'd the chief House of those *Jansenists* to be ras'd to the Ground, abus'd the Friendship and Confidence of the late King, and mention'd several of their Actions to him as fit to be condemn'd and pernicious to the Welfare of his State. The Ascendant they had over him was as great as that which the *Bonzes* had over the Emperor *Kao-tsong*. 'Tis true that the *French* Monarch did not abandon his Kingdom as the *Chinese* did, to go and shut himself up with the Disciples of *Ignatius*, but in the Close of his Life he trusted them entirely with the Government of his Dominions.

The Authority which the Jesuits had all this while, gain'd them several Friends; and the Clergy especially, in Hopes of attaining to great Dignities, courted their Favour. After the Death of the King their Protector, it was thought they would have been quite run aground, because the Sovereign who succeeded him being very young, the Prince who was appointed Regent gave no Credit to the Stories and Promises of the Jesuits. He was in his Heart, as they say, of the same Sentiments as the modern *Chinese* Commentators. Those People are here call'd *Spinosists*, (for what Reason I will tell thee another Time.) This Prince seem'd at first to favour the *Jansenists*; but at length the Politics of the Jesuits prevail'd, and whether it was that they knew better how to please him than the *Jansenists* did, he began just before he dy'd to protect them. Their Credit has ever since kept up its Head, so that 'tis as great now with the People as that of the *Bonzes* is with the *Chinese* Artificers. 'Tis Time now to conclude my Letter.

Farewel, Dear YN-CHE-CHAN, and let me hear from thee.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

From CHOANG *at* Iſpahan *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

I Make no Doubt, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, but thou art uneaſy that thou haſt not heard from me ſince my Departure for *Perſia*. I had ſo much Buſineſs to do, and ſo many Difficulties to ſurmount before I could reach *Iſpahan*, that thou muſt pardon me for not writing before I came to this Capital City of *Perſia*. I queſtion not but thou haſt heard ere now from our Friend *Sioeu-Tcheou*; pray tell me how he likes his Voyage to *Europe*. As for my Part, ſetting aſide the Cares that have been the Attendants of my Travels, I am rejoic'd that I took a Reſolution to paſs through *Perſia*, *Armenia*, and *Mingrelia*.

Iſpahan is a great City, full of magnificent Palaces and public Structures, which denote the Grandeur of the Princes by whoſe Direction they were built. The Moſques are more beautiful than any of the Temples in *China*, which indeed don't come near to them. The Bazars or public Markets are alſo very well worth the Sight of Foreigners, and are far ſuperior to thoſe of *Pekin*, which I believe may be compar'd to *Iſpahan* for the Extent of it; but in every other Reſpect is very much inferior to it: And really there would be no City in the Uni-

verſe that could come near *Iſpahan*, if moſt of its Streets were not crooked, narrow, rugged, and generally unpav'd. This takes off conſiderably from the Beauty of the public Buildings, and even of all the Palaces, which are built as it were in the Midſt of a vaſt Slough. The River *Zenderou* runs along by this City, and over it are built three noble Bridges, one of which anſwers directly to the Centre of this City, and the two others to the two Extremities.

As to the Walls of *Iſpahan*, they are only remarkable for their Extent. They are commonly reckoned twelve Leagues in Circuit. They are of Earth and in bad Repair, and are covered within and without by a great Number of Gardens and Houſes, which hide them every now and then, ſo that one would imagine a Part of them to be demoliſh'd.

Diſcord and Diſſention ſeem to have eſtabliſh'd their Reſidence at *Iſpahan*, the City being divided into two principal Quarters, whoſe Inhabitants are continually wrangling, and cannot bear with one another, though they have the ſame Prince and the ſame Religion, inſomuch that they very often fight and maim one another when they meet, for no other Cauſe but their mutual Hatred and Antipathy. This Madneſs or Fury 'tis true rages chiefly among the Vulgar, who I believe are hardly to be parallel'd for their Capriciouſneſs and Stupidity; but the great Men here as well as elſewhere, minding only their own Intereſt and Advancement, don't enter into theſe popular Piques, from which they would be ſure to reap no Advantage, but on the contrary to diſguſt the Court.

I ask'd a *Perſian*, a Man of Senſe and Probity, what was the Cauſe of this odd Diſſention, and he gave me this Account of it. " 'Tis pretended,

" *ſaid*

" *ſaid he*, that the Names of *Heider* and *Neamet-*
" *Olachi*, by which the two Parts of *Iſpahan* are
" call'd, are the Names of two Princes who for-
" merly divided all *Perſia* into two Parties. The
" Deſcendants of the People who were attach'd
" to thoſe Princes, retain their Fathers Hatred,
" which they inherit from them as they do their
" Eſtates. Inſtead of deploring the unhappy Con-
" duct of their Anceſtors, who had ſacrific'd their
" Fortunes and their Peace from a meer Attach-
" ment to their Princes, who made uſe of them
" as proper Tools to favour their Ambition, they
" imitate and even ſurpaſs their Folly, becauſe
" they hate one another without knowing why,
" Intereſt being quite out of the Queſtion, which
" ſhews to what a Degree the Populace are capa-
" ble of being blinded, and how difficult it is to
" diveſt them of old Grudges, how hurtful ſoever
" they are to them.

" Certain Authors of our Nation, *continued the*
" *ſage* Perſian, aſcribe another Origin to the two
" Factions into which this City is divided, *viz.*
" Religion, which to me ſeems more probable
" than the other; for nothing is more terrible and
" of longer Continuance than Hatred bred by
" Diſputes about Religion; for after the Reconci-
" liation of the two Parties, or the total Humili-
" ation of either of them, there remains a Leaven
" of Diſcord that can never be purg'd out. I have
" heard it ſaid by ſeveral *French* Merchants ſettled
" in this City, that the Diviſions which reign'd
" in their Country an Age ago about Religion, have
" form'd Hatreds among them that will be ever-
" laſting; though it ſeems now that there is but
" one and the ſame Faith all over *France*. The
" *Perſian* Authors that I have hinted ſay therefore
" that *Iſpahan* conſiſted at firſt but of two Vil-

" lages over againſt one another, whoſe Inhabitants " were mortal Enemies, becauſe ſome were at- " tach'd to the Sentiments of *Omar*, the others to " thoſe of *Ali*. At length the two Villages being " join'd together as the Town ſpread, and being " become but one City, the Inhabitants, though " reconcil'd as to their Religious Sentiments, kept " up their Hatred, and could not forgive one another " for having once thought in a different Manner. " And even now in all public Solemnities and Feſti- " vals one Part of the Populace generally fights with " another; Precedency being the Pretence for an " enraged Mob to throw Stones, uſe Cudgels, or " any other Weapons they happen to lay their " Hands on. There's always one or another kill'd " in theſe Skirmiſhes, eſpecially when the Empe- " ror is not at *Iſpahan*, the Governor being very " glad to ſee ſuch Battles, becauſe he may have a " Pretence to ſummon the moſt wealthy of " the Combatants to his Tribunal, and to fill his " Pockets with their Fines; ſo that the Avarice " of him, who ought to maintain Peace and Tran- " quillity, is partly the Cauſe of the Troubles and " Diſturbances. All thinking People have done " their beſt towards extinguiſhing this pernicious " Hatred; but you know the Temper of the com- " mon People; the more one ſtrives to convince " them by Reaſon, the more are they harden'd " and pleaſed with their Follies. Next Day after " the public Feaſts, every Artificer gives an Ac- " count to his Family of the Actions which he " perform'd againſt the Enemy the Day before, " and ſo inſpires his Children from their Cradles " with his Sentiments, which they ſuck in as it " were with their Mother's Milk. Thus are all " Cuſtoms, whether good or bad, perpetuated " among the Vulgar, and the Children derive their

" Errors

" Errors principally from their Parents. In ſhort, " there is no driving ſome Prejudices totally out " of a Country, without driving out the old and " bringing in a new Set of Inhabitants.

" There is Hopes of reclaiming Perſons of Genius and Learning, whatever miſtaken Notions " they may have given into; becauſe ſooner or later the Underſtanding will get the better of thoſe " Prejudices by which it had been dup'd; but with " Men who act in a Manner mechanically, who " behave ſo and ſo to Day only becauſe they did " ſo yeſterday, there is no Hopes that they will " ever hearken to Reaſon, becauſe they never knew " the Uſe of it; ſo that in all Appearance, the Deſcendants of the Inhabitants of *Iſpahan* will be " as arrant Fools as their Fathers are now, and " as their Anceſtors were formerly."

I thought this *Perſian*'s Diſcourſe, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, very judicious. I deſir'd him to give me a Light ſometimes into Things that might puzzle me, and he promiſed me in a very obliging Manner to do every Thing of that Kind that lay in his Power. The *Perſians* in general are polite, affable, and much more learned than the other Mahometans. They have Vivacity and Spirit, and have excell'd the *Arabians*, who were their firſt Maſters, in the Sciences. It has happened to the latter juſt as it did to the *Greeks*, who were for a long Time, as one may call it, the Preceptors of Mankind, but afterwards declin'd and loſt their Reputation: In like Manner the *Arabians* ſo learned and wiſe heretofore, and who had ſuch great Men among them, are now very ignorant. When they loſt their Liberty they ſeem to have loſt their Genius: Conſequently the Populace by Way of Deriſion call the Colleges, in which there are none but *Arabians*, *Colleges of Aſſes*.

'Tis

'Tis true there are some *Arabians* still, who have not lost their Liberty; but for the Sake of preserving it, they are obliged to live in the Midst of the Deserts, and to deprive themselves of Correspondence with other Men. Such a Life is not proper for the Sciences, which absolutely demand a close and regular Society, not only with the Learned Men of the Country, but also with Foreigners. As fond as the *Chinese* always were of the Sciences, how many Discoveries have they not been oblig'd for to the *European* Missionaries?

Yet the *Arabic* is in *Persia* the Language of the Men of Learning, as the *Latin* is in *Europe*; and all the best Books of Philosophy, Divinity, and Physic are written in that Idiom. 'Tis still a Comfort for the *Arabians* to see their Language as much in Esteem as it was in the most flourishing State of their Nation.

As the *Persians* are in Love with the Sciences, they are altogether as fond of Tranquillity: It may be even said that they are very voluptuous, and that they aim to reduce every Thing to this single Point, *viz.* what may agreeably amuse them. They only cultivate the Sciences, because they think them an agreeable Diversion for some Hours of the Day. They love Expence; 'tis a necessary Consequence of their Inclination for Pleasure, and they seldom deny themselves what is capable of flattering their Taste when they are able to get it. Their Houses seem to be built on Purpose to procure them Pleasure; and that Rank of People who are abandon'd in other Places to a scandalous Habit of Drunkenness, and seem to be ignorant of every Thing that is delicate, have at *Ispahan* a nice and exquisite Taste. A Courtezan, called *Twelve Tomans* or *Fifty Lewidors*, because she took that Sum for the first Time any Man had to do with

with her, had caus'd a charming Houſe to be built, which ſeem'd to be a Temple worthy of the Goddeſs *Venus*. It was ſmall, but the Rooms were magnificently adorned, the Cielings were painted with Gold and Azure, and the Objects repreſented there were Incentives to the Pleaſures of Love. In the middle of ſome Rooms Fountains play'd into Marble Baſons. Theſe Apartments were deſign'd to paſs the Heat of the Summer in; and thoſe in which ſhe ſpent the Winter were ſo curiouſly laid out, that they ſeem'd to enjoy one eternal Spring. Judge, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, what muſt be the Conveniences of the Palaces of the Nobility, and of the Houſes of wealthy private Men, if that of a Courtezan is ſo well contriv'd.

One Fault I find in the *Perſians* is, that they are exceſſively full of Compliments, like the *French*; inſomuch that they by far outſtrip our Countrymen, who are complaiſant enough in Conſcience. When I meet a *Perſian* here of my Acquaintance, methinks I hear a *Pariſian* Miſſionary; he careſſes me with vaſt Proteſtations of Friendſhip and Offers of Service; but the worſt on't is, that in all this there is no more Sincerity among the *Perſians*, than there is among the *French*, and to give Credit either to the one or the other would be a ſure Way to be deceiv'd.

Farewel, Dear YN-CHE-CHAN.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris * *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

THE Letter I now write, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is in Anſwer to thine, which was to perſuade me to abandon the Opinions of the modern Commentators. Thou ſay'ſt they appear monſtrous to all *Europeans*, who cannot comprehend how Men could be ſo ignorant as to know no other firſt Principle but a cœleſtial blind and material Virtue, which conducts the Univerſe, vivifies all Beings, and always acts with Rule, but without knowing it. Thou didſt mention ſeveral Reaſons to combat thoſe Opinions, to which I will preſently return an Anſwer, but I muſt firſt ſet thee right in a Miſtake thou art under as to the *Europeans* Faith. There are many of them who adhere to a Syſtem, which very much reſembles that of the modern *Chineſe* Commentators. *Spinoſa* a Learned *Dutchman* was the Inventor or rather the Reſtorer of it, for 'tis ſaid that ſome of the ancient Philoſophers held almoſt the very ſame Notions: He ſuppoſes as well as the *Chineſe*, that there

* This Letter is an Anſwer to that which *Yn-Che-Chan* wrote to *Sioeu-Tcheou*, to perſuade him to renounce the Opinions of the modern Interpreters of the Com-

there is but one only Substance which he calls God *, and of whom all other Beings are but Modifications. "One Substance, says he †, is necessarily "infinite; 'tis therefore impossible that there should "be several, because there cannot be two Infinities, and because infinity absolutely excludes the "Existence of any other Being which is not contained in itself. Therefore every Thing that exists must be God ‡, and every Thing which exists, exists in him."

Commentary of *Tchu-tse* and *Tching-tse*. I have been obliged to report all the bad Arguments us'd by the Learned to establish their monstrous Hypothesis, which has been already confuted at large in *Yn-Che-Chan*'s Letter, and will be entirely demolished in one that will soon follow this. I thought fit to place this Remark here to obviate the Cavils of some Men, who glad of an Opportunity to run down an Author, would not have fail'd to say that I lent Arms to Irreligion. I only report the Opinions and Arguments of the *Chinese* here, in Order to expose them, and to have a Handle for confuting them. None but Persons, whose Hearts are as black as their Understandings are muddy, would impute a Thing to me as a Crime, which is not only lawful but even necessary for an Historian; there is no blaming of me without blaming all the other Authors, both Catholic and Protestant, who have treated of the *Chinese*.

* *Quicquid est, in Deo est, & nihil sine Deo esse, neque concipi potest.* Prop. xv. B. D. Spinos. Opera posthuma, Ethice ordine Geometrico demonstrata &c. p. 3.

† *Omnis substantia est necessario infinitu.* Propos. viii. Idem ibid. p. 5.

‡ *Præter Deum nulla dari neque concipi potest substantia.* Propos. xiv. Idem ibid. p. 13.

Men, Plants, the Stars, *&c.* in short all Beings whatsoever, † Thinking or not Thinking, are but Modes of the only and universal Substance, to which *Spinosa* was pleased to give the Appellation of God: 'Tis only substituting the Term *Li* in its Place, and all the *European* Spinosists will think precisely like the Followers of the modern *Chinese* Interpreters. What do these Doctors say? That Heaven and Earth, that in short the whole Universe, is compos'd of one only Substance. The *Li* is the same with Respect to all the different Beings, as the Ridge is with Regard to an Edifice: It unites and keeps all the Parts of the Universe together, and gives them their different Forms; so that when those Beings change their Figure and Modifications, 'tis by its Assistance that this happens; every Thing proceeds from the general Substance, and every Thing returns to it; every Thing is animated and vivified by the *Li*, a Virtue intrinsically and inseparably united to this Substance.

The same Arguments which the Spinosists urge for maintaining the Necessity of the sole Existence of this extended Substance, serve the *Chinese* to prove what they say of the *Li*; for if it be true that a Substance is a Being existent by itself, infinite,

† *Hic, antequam ulterius pergamus, revocandum nobis in memoriam est id, quod supra ostendimus: nempe quod quicquid ab infinito intellectu percipi potest, tanquam substantia essentiam constituens, id omne ad unicam tantum substantiam pertinet, & consequenter quod substantia cogitans, & substantia extensa una eademque substantia est, quæ jam sub hoc, jam sub illo attributo comprehenditur; sic etiam modus extensionis & idea illius modi, una eademque est res, sed duobus modis expressa.* Bened. Spinos. *Opera Posthuma, Ethices* part 2. *de Mente.* p. 46.

and

and not to be produc'd by another, what the *European* Spinosists call *God*, and the modern *Chinese* Commentators *Li*, must necessarily be eternal and infinite, because by these Names is understood the productive Cause, which maintains all the particular Beings, which pushes them from its Bosom, if I may be allow'd the Expression, and which re-admits them into it afterwards, to reproduce them in another Manner and with new Modifications.

Thou perceivest, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that the System of the New Commentators does not appear so absurd to the *Europeans* as thou did'st imagine. The Missionaries imposed upon us when they told us that their Sentiments seem'd monstrous to all their Countrymen; they were far from mentioning this *Spinosa* to us; much less did they tell us of the many Adherents that he has in *France*, *Germany*, *England*, *Holland*, and especially in *Italy*. 'Tis true, that the Hypothesis of this *Dutch* Philosopher differs from that of the Modern Commentators, as far as he seems to have pretended that the Order we now see in the Universe, was very near the same in all Times, and that God, or the Extended and Infinite Substance, had, from all Eternity, produc'd an infinite Number of Modifications, and receiv'd them into his Bosom, in order to reproduce them a-new. These Consequences flow naturally from *Spinosa*'s Principles; for he lays it down, that the Extended Immense Substance was in all Times the same as 'tis now, and endowed with the same Virtues, and the same Qualities. Therefore those Virtues and Qualities, which never were in a State of Inaction, must needs produce the same Effects; and the mutual Succession of the different Modifications has therefore always taken place.

The modern Commentators don't admit of the eternal Regulation of the Universe; but say, That

it was laid open by little and little, and insensibly. "Heaven and Earth *, *says the learned* Tchin *in his Dialogue of the* Origin *and State of the World*, "were not yet in Being, when in the Middle of "an immense Vacuum, there was but one Sub- "stance, and that extremely confused. This Sub- "stance, in this State of the Chaos, was unlimited "and boundless; whatever was public and spirituous "in this indefinite Mass, was as it were the Form. "The *Li-Ki* and the Soul of *Tac-ki*, in the very "first supreme State of the Universe, was truly "the Principle of Heaven and Earth; the Bud "from which they sprung, and an infinite Number "of Beings, came the same Way. However all "this Discovery ought to be plac'd in the Rank "of those Productions, the Springs of which are "astonishing. The World having once those "Parts, those Kinds of Productions, which, as to "the Manner of them, escape our Senses, were "very rare; for we commonly see, that Species "are perpetuated by sensible and ordinary Ways "and Means."

I will own, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that I should have been glad, were it possible, that the modern Commentators had been exactly of the same Notions as the *Spinosists*; for I can't easily comprehend how it could happen, that, during the Eternity anterior to the Formation of the World, that which was most subtle and vivifying in the *Tac-ki* in the supreme Indefinite, which immediately preceded all the definite Beings, and was, as it were, the Seed which produced Heaven and Earth, could rest in Inaction. Now it was always in Motion, or always at Rest; if it had been always in Motion, it must at all times have wrought the Effects which we see it

* I make use of the Translation of *Pere du Halac*.

produce;

produce; if it was always at Reſt, it could never come out of that Reſt but by the Help of another Being, which communicated the Motion to it; which conſequently was before it, and had the moſt perfect and the moſt proper Qualities to produce the Diſplay of the World. But let us proceed a little farther; What is it that gave the Motion to that Being? Had it Motion from all Time, or did it receive it? If the former, it muſt have perform'd the ſame thing as the *Tac-ki* muſt; and if the latter, muſt have received it from another, and that other from another, which makes a vicious Circle, or, at leaſt, a Gradation without End, and without Bounds.

It therefore ſeems natural to eſtabliſh, as well as the *Spinoſiſts* do, that the only and immenſe Subſtance having from all Time had all the Qualities it has now, it has ſucceſſively produc'd and received into its Boſom all the Modifications which it ſucceſſively produces and receives, even at this Day. In the Maintenance of this Opinion, which to me ſeems very natural, one gets rid of thoſe Objections which may be made againſt the Inaction of Subſtance in the Eternity before the Formation of the Univerſe. There are ſeveral *Frenchmen* here nevertheleſs, who, adhering to the Sentiments of an ancient *Greek* Philoſopher, think that the World was formed much in the ſame manner as the modern Commentators pretend; which *Frenchmen* are called *Epicureans*, from the Name of their Maſter *Epicurus*.

I will tell thee another Time of the Conformity there is between the Opinions of this Philoſopher and thoſe of the learned *Tchin*: I will employ the reſt of this Letter in anſwering the Arguments by which thou endeavoureſt to prove, that 'tis impoſſible that the Order of the Univerſe ſhould be

produc'd

produc'd and maintain'd by a Virtue infinite in Power, but blind and material. I ſee evident Proofs of theſe two Truths. The firſt I perceive in the daily Production of ſo many different Modifications before my Eyes. I perceive, as one may ſay, that all Matter is animated by that general Virtue which vivifies it: Trees grow, Men are formed, even Stones grow bigger, and ſhew that they have a Virtue which animates them; theſe Modifications when deſtroy'd, reproduce another Sort of 'em; and the Virtue which is diffuſed in the fineſt Particles of Matter never remains in Inaction. From a thing ſo evident, I muſt therefore infer, that there is an infinite Virtue in the Power which is the Cauſe of the Order and of the Production of the Univerſe. Let us now ſee, if I can look upon it as intelligent, and as acting with Knowledge of the Cauſe. All ſeems to tell me, that it is blind, as is maintained by the modern Commentators, whom, with ſo much Contempt, thou condemneſt.

If the firſt Principle which conducts and governs the Univerſe is Intelligent, if it knows every thing, if it has in ſhort all the Perfections which the ancient Interpreters of the Canonical Books give it, who ſpeak of it ſo pompouſly under the Name of *Tien*; from whence comes the Evil that reigns in this World, and why is almoſt all Mankind ſo unhappy? Was it not proper that an intelligent Being, which was ſovereignly Powerful, ſhould make uſe of his Power to render all Beings as happy as poſſible? That's the natural Idea which we have of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of a Firſt Intelligent Principle. But now let us only ſtick to what concerns human Beings, without going in purſuit of a great many viſible and very eſſential Faults in the Conſtruction of the World: With how many Evils are they not oppreſs'd? Their

Life

Life is in a manner one continued Series of Misfortunes: They who enjoy Health of Body are oppreſſed with Miſery and Poverty; they who have the Favours of Fortune, are a Prey to the Gout, the Gravel, the Stone, *&c.* In fine, the Pains of the Body ſometimes accompany the Frowns of Fortune, and make thoſe who are often very virtuous intirely wretched, while we ſee Criminals ſtain'd with the Guilt of the deepeſt Die, enjoy perfect Health and Heaps of Treaſure; a very ſtrong Proof of the Blindneſs of that Power which diſtributes Good and Evil, and preſides over the Lot of Mankind. But ſuppoſing, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that only thoſe Perſons guilty of any Crimes were unhappy, the Argument for eſtabliſhing a Firſt Intelligent Principle would be no better founded; for if it acts with Knowledge, if it directs every thing with Prudence, why, inſtead of puniſhing the Guilty, does it not hinder them from being ſuch? 'Tis plain from Reaſon that it ſhould; and ſince ſuch Principle is the Supreme Reaſon, how comes it to behave ſo contrary to it? If it had pleas'd, all Men would have been virtuous; why then, if it be an Intelligent Principle, was not that the Caſe, ſince it ſeems but a Conſequence of its Intelligence?

Theſe, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, are the Arguments of the modern Commentators, of whom we have talk'd often at *Pekin*; thou did'ſt then flatly condemn them, and by thy Letter it ſeemeth thou haſt no better Opinion of them now; at which I do not wonder, for every one is fond of his own Opinion.

Farewel; and let me hear from thee.

LET-

LETTER XV.

From CHOANG *at* Ispahan *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Paris.

DEAR *Yn-Che-Chan*, the *Persians* are more jealous than all the other Eastern Nations; and the Seraglio's of the *Turks* and *Tartars* look, as if they were Public Houses, compar'd with those of the *Persians*, who don't think it enough to encompass the Apartment of their Women with one very high Wall, but commonly have two or three Circumvallations, the Entrance of which is guarded by Eunuchs, who are such quick-sighted *Argus's*, that nothing can escape their Vigilance.

And as if all these Precautions were not sufficient to quiet their Jealousy, they have brought Religion into their Interests, and call'd Superstition to their Assistance. This seems at first very strange Policy, but when 'tis nicely consider'd, the Craft of it is easily perceived. The Fear of Punishment makes much greater Impression upon the Oriental Ladies than the Love of Virtue; and they are more afraid of offending their Prophet than their Husband. The *Persians* therefore make their Wives believe, that when their Legislator *Mahomet* was at the Point of Death, the last Piece of Advice he gave them was, *Be watchful of your Religion, and your*

your Wives. This Command gives them Authority for ſaying, That thoſe Wives, who preſume to look upon any Man but their Husband, are guilty of an unpardonable Crime. They ſay moreover, that ſuch as do but caſt an Eye on the Apartment where their Wives are ſhut up, diſhonour God, and hazard their own Salvation. They even pretend, that in Heaven 'tis forbid to look upon other Men's Wives; and they teach, that the Men in Paradiſe ſhall have their Eyes upon the Crown of their Heads, that they may not ſee the Wives of the other bleſſed Inhabitants. But, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I wou'd fain know how in that caſe thoſe happy Men could ſee their own Wives. Are they to be ſuſpended over their Heads? If ſo, they will ſee the Wives of the others, ſince probably they will be ſuſpended all alike in the Air. Are the Women to be cloſe by them? In this Caſe, they will not be able to ſee either their own Wives, or thoſe of others; and therefore they might as well be altogether deprived of Sight, as to have their Eyes placed on the Top of their Heads.

I can't help ſmiling, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, when I reflect on the Fables invented by Men, to give a Sanction to their Paſſions, which they artfully cover with the Cloak of Religion. What Philoſopher is there, be he ever ſo grave, but muſt laugh as heartily as *Democritus*, when he hears that a whole Nation is for placing the Eyes of the Happy upon their Heads, to demonſtrate that 'tis not lawful, either in this World or the next, to look upon other Men's Wives?

Such is the Jealouſy of the *Perſians*, that they are not only afraid to have their Wives ſeen while living, but even after they are dead; therefore, when they bury them, they erect a Pavilion round the Grave, that thoſe who come thither may not

ſee the Corpſe that is buried in it. I would forgive the *Perſians*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, for concealing their Wives, while living, from the Eyes of the curious Spectators, when they have Reaſon to fear leſt ſuch Contemplation of them may rob them of their Affection, and tempt them to be falſe to their Beds: But can they be fond of a dead Corpſe; can they fear any thing from the fickle Temper of their Wives, when they are no longer in Being? There is really in the Behaviour of the *Perſians* more Madneſs than Jealouſy.

As the *Europeans* are blamed for giving their Wives too much Indulgence; ſo the ſenſeleſs Jealouſy of the *Perſians* cannot be too much condemn'd. In my Opinion, the *Chineſe* preſerve a juſt Medium betwixt the *Chriſtians* and the *Mahometans*; for they don't, like the former, allow their Wives a boundleſs Liberty, nor, like the latter, do they keep them in hard Bondage, and condemn them to perpetual Impriſonment. They may ſee their Husband's Relations and Friends; they ſhew themſelves to ſuch as have any thing to ſay to them; in ſhort, they enjoy all the Rights and all the Advantages which are attach'd to human Nature, and are treated by their Husbands as 'tis fitting they ſhould be.

The *Perſian* Wives are treated for the moſt part like outlandiſh Creatures, which are maintain'd for nothing but the Diverſion of their Maſter. I compare a Citizen of *Iſpahan*, who keeps ſeven or eight Wives pent up in a cloſe Place, to a Man that keeps four or five unhappy Nightingales in a Cage after he has blinded them, that they may ſing the better. The *Perſian* Women, like thoſe Birds, are equally deprived of the Sight of the whole Univerſe, and are made Captives, to the End that the Impoſſibility of their ſeeing any others, beſides

the

the Man they belong to, may increaſe their Love for him. What a ſad Expedient is this, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, for a Heart, that is truly tender, to be obliged to have Recourſe to the Stratagem of burying a dear Lady alive, that ſhe may return Love for Love.

I dare ſay, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that there are hardly two Matches in *Perſia*, that are truly happy; for Check and Conſtraint, when they are puſh'd to Exceſs, neceſſarily inſpire even the moſt virtuous Hearts with Deſires to be freed. 'Tis idle to ſay, as they do here, that Women born in the Centre of a Seraglio, and bred up in the Manners and Cuſtoms there obſerved, don't think them extraordinary; for tho' they ſee but one Man, yet they can't help thinking, that there muſt be others more amiable and more complaiſant. Their Reaſon tells them ſo, and can it be doubted, that when they ſee the Difference betwixt the Beauty of Women, they imagine there's the ſame betwixt one Man and another? I am ſo far from thinking, that the Impoſſibility for them to ſee any other Man, than him to whom they belong, makes them in Love with his Perſon, that, on the contrary, it ſometimes perſuades them, that he is not ſo handſome as he really is. Beſides tho' Curioſity and the other Paſſions, by which Women are ſo captivated, did not inſpire them with a Deſire of ſeeing Strangers, yet their Conſtitution, which in this Country partakes of the Heat of the Climate, wou'd furniſh their Fancy with ſufficient Ideas of the Men, whom they are with ſo much Care debarr'd from ſeeing. The Stories that are here told of certain Women, who in ſpite of all Precautions, have baffled the Vigilance of their Overſeers, are Proofs that when a fair Opportunity offers, the Prepoſſeſſions they are ſuppoſed to be under in favour of the Life which

they lead in the Seraglio's, are no Guarantees for their Fidelity.

The Jealousy of the *Persians* expoſes the Inhabitants of theſe Countries to a thouſand Inconveniencies, and ſometimes to terrible Outrages; and Foreigners eſpecially, who are not acquainted with the Cuſtoms of the *Perſians*, run a riſque ſometimes of being cruelly threſh'd, and even kill'd. In travelling with the Caravans, and in Lodging, where there are Women, either in the Fields or in the Caravanſtrays, [Inns] Care muſt be taken to keep as far as poſſible from the Tents or Chambers where the Women lye; which Rule, if forgot or miſtaken, the Eunuchs, or the Husbands, preſently call out to bid you be gone with all Speed; and Woe be to thoſe that don't inſtantly obey, for they would be baited like wild Beaſts; and even ſuch as they, who had no Concern in the Affair, wou'd warmly eſpouſe the Husband's Quarrel. The Shepherds of a whole Canton would not fall with more Fury upon a Lion that devour'd their Flocks, than all the Travellers upon a Man who ſhould be ſuſpected of an Attempt to look upon the Women, who, if they happen to be upon the Road, tho' ſhut up in cover'd Waggons, the Men muſt be forced to turn out of the Way. 'Tis more troubleſome to meet a Woman in *Perſia*, than for a Man who walks on Foot at *Paris*, to meet thirty Coaches in one of the narrow Streets. 'Tis true, that for avoiding all this Trouble the Women travel abroad as little as poſſible, and when the Women of a certain Rank go to make Viſits, they commonly chooſe the Night for it; when ſeveral Horſemen ride a hundred Paces before them, ſeveral others follow at the ſame Diſtance behind them, and the Eunuchs, arm'd with long Staves, place themſelves in the Intervals between the Horſemen and the Ladies.

Ladies. And in the mean time they all cry out, *Couroue*, *Couroue*, the *Perſian* Word for *Run away*; which ſtrikes as much Terror here, as *Kill, kill*, does in a Town taken by Storm, and abandon'd to the Fury of the Soldiers. Every one flies, every one plays leaſt in ſight, and Woe be to thoſe that are not nimble enough to get away with Speed; for they are ſure to feel the Weight of the Eunuchs great Staves upon their Backs.

The *Couroue*, which is given out for the Wives of the Sovereign, is ſtill more terrible; for nothing leſs than Death is a ſufficient Attonement for the Crime of meeting them upon the Road. If they go through a Town, no Man muſt be ſeen in the Streets thro' which they paſs, or ſuch as lead to them. If they go into the Country, the Villages are diſpeopled, all the Men being drove out, or forced to remove a League off the Day before; for next Day when the Ladies paſs, the Eunuchs ſcower the Country on all Sides; and if any Man has the Misfortune to fall in their Way, they kill him outright, without admitting of any Reaſon or Excuſe that might juſtify him. Several Inſtances have happened of this Barbarity.

Yet would'ſt thou believe it, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that notwithſtanding this ſtrange Jealouſy of the *Perſians*, the Love of Grandeur and Riches, makes them put up with the groſſeſt Affronts a Husband can receive? Theſe Men, ſo jealous as they are, don't repine at being Cuckolds, when they are made ſo by the Sovereign; and they think it a great Credit, that the Emperor will vouchſafe to honour their Wives, not only with his Sight, but with his Favours. 'Tis a Law in *Perſia*, that the King may go whenever he will to the Seraglio's of his Subjects, be they of ever ſuch Quality and Diſtinction. 'Tis true, he ſeldom uſes this Privilege,

having Women enough of his own, without going abroad for others; but it happens sometimes, that the Emperors, either for Curiosity, or a Debauch, go and make such Visits to the Wives of the Great Men: A very singular Accident of this kind happened to *Abas* the Great. This Prince having drank very plentifully at the House of *Iman-Couli-Can*, one of his Favourites, was for going into the Apartments where his Wives were; but he that kept the Door refused him Entrance; saying, *Not a Man shall put in his Mustachio here, as long as I am the Porter, besides my Master.* "What, *said the Emperor*, do'st thou "not know me?" Yes, said the Guard, I know you are King of the Men, but not of the Women. This Turn pleased *Abas*, and he retir'd to his Palace. But when *Iman-Couli-Can* heard of this Adventure, he went immediately and fell at the Emperor's Feet; *Sir*, said he, *I beg you would not be angry with me, for the Fault committed by my sorry Domestic*, for *I have already turned him away*. *Abas* made Answer to the Favourite. "*The* "*Fellow has done no Harm; and since you have* "*dismissed him, I will take him into my Service.*" And he gave him a small Government.

By this Story, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I can see how fond the Courtiers are of Grandeur. A Person, tho' jealous to the last Degree, is sorry that his Seraglio was not laid open to his Sovereign. The Temper of Courts is very near the same in all Countries. In *Europe*, the Nobility are fond to have their Ladies preferr'd to such Stations as may get them the Favour of their Princes; and in *Persia*, they approve, and even wish, that their Monarchs may come to visit them in their Seraglio's. What is there too hard for Ambition to surmount?

surmount! and what is there that Men will not sacrifice for the sake of it!

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN, *farewel.*

LETTER XVI.

From YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin * *to* SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris.

Dear SIOEU-TCHEOU,

THY Letters I have read over with Pleasure; but am sorry to see thee still persist in the dangerous Opinions with which thou art prejudic'd.

Thou thinkest thou hast urged strong Arguments to prove thy Sentiments, by representing all the Misfortunes with which Mankind is oppress'd. I agree with thee, as to those real Evils; nay more, I own 'tis impossible, that a Being, Sovereignly Powerful, Good, and Intelligent, can be the Cause of them; but nevertheless, I still see the absolute Necessity of the Existence of this Intelligent Being; consequently whatever Objections start in my View, I from thence conclude, that it exists, and that if I am at a loss to solve any Objections, I ascribe it to my Want of Under-

* This is the Answer which I promised to the last but one.

ſtanding, and not to the Divinity. As ſoon as I have prov'd that there muſt have been a Firſt Intelligent Being, the Objections which are only acceſſory, ought not to prevail againſt the cleareſt Proofs, and ſuch as are founded on the moſt ſimple and moſt natural Principles. My Reaſon ſhews me the abſolute Neceſſity for a Firſt Intelligent Being; either I muſt ſhut my Eyes againſt the Light of Nature, or I muſt ſubſcribe to what that Reaſon tells me: 'Tis true, that it meets afterwards with ſome things which it cannot penetrate; but tho' I ought to pity myſelf for the Poverty of my Underſtanding, I ought not to deny what it demonſtrates to me with Evidence: For this would be acting as weakly as a Man who, having Sight, and not able to diſcern Objects that are five hundred Paces from him, ſhould therefore deny that ſuch as he ſees diſtinctly at but four Paces have any real Exiſtence

I may therefore affirm, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, that tho' I meet with Difficulties in the Origin of Evil, the Exiſtence of a Being Infinite in Power, in Goodneſs and Underſtanding is not the leſs neceſſary; for without repeating the Proofs here, which I brought to thee in my former Letter, of the Neceſſity of this Firſt Being, either for having given Order, or for preſerving it, I will ſhew thee, even by conforming to the Arguments upon which thou foundeſt the Preference thou giveſt to the Sentiment of the *Spinoſiſts*, beyond that of the modern Doctors, (tho' in my Opinion they are both equally bad) I will convince thee, I ſay, that there muſt be an Eternal and Intelligent Being.

Thou condemneſt thy Brethren, becauſe they think that a Principle, which is material and inactive, is capable of putting itſelf in Motion. How, ſay'ſt

ſay'ſt thou, could Motion happen in Matter? For Motion ſuppoſes what is moveable, and what is moveable a *Primum Mobile:* Therefore ſomething muſt have given Motion to the Matter which was in Motion before it, and which was more powerful; conſequently there was at all times a Being Diſtinct from it, without which it would have always been at Reſt.

When thou ſay'ſt, that what we ſee was at all times the ſame, I demand what other Proof thou can'ſt give of it but a magiſterial Aſſertion; a very improper Way to convince People with whom nothing will go down but good Arguments. If the Earth had been always ſuch as it is, ſhould we ſee it every Day decaying, changing its Form, and manifeſtly approaching to its Diſſolution? I am not for giving into wild *Pyrrhoniſm*, nor for refuſing all Manner of Belief to the ancient Hiſtory. Do not we know, that it formerly produc'd, with very little Pains, what it now does not bring forth without much Toil? Did not Men live much longer heretofore, than now; and did they not partake of the juvenile Vigour of the World? But 'tis not only in the Earth that we ſee ſuch Alterations as ought to induce us to think the World is decaying; for ſeveral have already happen'd in the Heavens. The Ancients diſcover'd Stars there, which we don't ſee. Who can doubt, but thoſe Stars are for ever extinct? If they had diſappear'd only to make a certain Tour, they would have ſhewn themſelves again after ſuch a Number of Ages, and in ſo long a time their Revolution would no doubt have been finiſh'd.

'Tis therefore abſurd, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, to affirm, that what we ſee now was ſuch from all Time. In an Order which were to be Eternal, there could happen no Change of any Nature whatſoever, be-

cauſe 'tis the Eſſence of a Thing which had no Beginning to have no End, and becauſe a Being which has exiſted in all Time paſt, muſt exiſt equally in all Time to come.

I go farther, Dear *Sieou Tcheou*, and affirm, that according to the Syſtem which admits of the Eternity of Regulation and Order in the Univerſe, every Thing which is now, muſt neceſſarily have been from all Time, and Men muſt have been all Eternal as the Stars. For who was the firſt Man that died? To this it will be anſwer'd, They have died from all Time; but I maintain, that if the World was from all Time, nothing of what has exiſted from all Time could periſh; inſomuch that as the ſame Sun was from all Eternity, ſo the other Things, co-eternal with that Star, muſt not have receiv'd any Alteration.

The modern Doctors thy Maſters, whom thou condemneſt, were well aware of all theſe Objections, and therefore they did not preſume to maintain the Eternity of the Order and Regulation of the Univerſe. They pretend, that Matter was quite inactive during the Time preceding the Diſplay of the World, and are guilty of that very Error which thou ſo well confuteſt. The ancient *Epicureans*, of whom thou makeſt Mention to me, have had the ſame Fate; for in endeavouring to avoid one Rock, they have ſplit againſt another: But they have choſe rather to expoſe themſelves to all the Abſurdities which attend the Formation of the Univerſe, by a blind Principle, than to eſtabliſh the Eternity of the World, of which they foreſaw all the Difficulties. The Parts of the World *, that are

* *Haud igitur lethi præcluſa eſt janua cælo,*
Nec ſoli, terræque, nec altis æquoris undis:
Sed patet, immani, et vaſto reſpectat hiatu,

Quare

liable to Corruption, convinc'd them, that the Universe could not be Eternal, becauſe 'tis natural for the Whole to follow the Nature of its Parts. They moreover perceiv'd, that Time * deſtroy'd, alter'd, and

Quare etiam nativa neceſſum eſt confiteare
Hæc eadem: neque enim mortali corpore quæ ſunt,
Ex infinito jam tempore adhuc potuiſſent
Immenſi validas ævi contemnere vires.
Lucret. de Rerum Natura, Lib. V. v. 374, &c.

Tranſlated by Mr. CREECH.

Therefore theſe Heavens and Earth can waſte and dye
And therefore once began; for what can fail
And waſte; o'er what the Strokes of Fate prevail,
Muſt be unable to endure the Rage
Of Infinite paſt Time, and Pow'r of Age.

* *Denique non lapides quoque Vinci cernis ab ævo?*
Non altas turres ruere, et putreſcere ſaxa?
Non delubra Deûm ſimulachraque feſſa fatiſci?
Nec ſanctum Numen fati protollere fines
Poſſe? Neque adverſus naturæ fœdera niti?
Denique non monumenta virûm dilapſa videmus
Cedere proporro, ſubitoque ſeneſcere caſu?
Non ruere avulſos ſilices à montibus altis,
Nec validas ævi vires perferre patique
Finiti? Neque enim caderent avolſa repente,
Ex infinito quæ tempore pertoleraſſent
Omnia tormenta ætatis privata fragore.
Ib. v. 307, &c.

Ev'n ſtrongeſt Tow'rs and Rocks, all feel the Rage
Of Pow'rful Time; even Temples waſte by Age.
Nor can the Gods themſelves prolong their Date,
Change Nature's Laws, or get Reprieve from Fate.
Ev'n Tombs grow old, and waſte, by Years o'erthrown;
Men's Graves before, but now become their own,

and over-turn'd the moſt ſubſtantial Edifices; that Stones rotted away, and moulder'd to Duſt; that the Air waſted the hardeſt Rocks; that Mountains cleav'd, and fell down with a Craſh into the Plains; that Fires, Conflagrations, and Storms devoured all Bodies one after another; how then ſhould they think that the World might have ſubſiſted from Eternity, after giving ſuch plain Proofs of its future Deſtruction?

Return therefore, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, from thy Miſtake; and ſince thou thyſelf agreeſt, that 'tis impoſſible that Matter could of itſelf have given Motion to itſelf, and have quitted the inactive State it was in if ſome other Principle, more powerful than it, had not put it in Motion, don't offer to maintain the Eternity of Order and Regulation in the World, contrary to all evident Proofs. Own honeſtly, that it has received it from an Intelligent Being; as ſoon as thou haſt agreed to this Truth, thou wilt find it impoſſible that Unthinking Matter can produce a Thinking Being, as Man is, and that conſequently there muſt neceſſarily be a Firſt Intelligent Being, independent of Matter, from whom Men have received their Intelligent Faculty; for to affirm, as the *Dutch* Philoſopher, and the Diſciples of whom thou makeſt mention to me, do, that Matter is the Firſt Eternal and Thinking Being, of whom the others are only Modifications, is to advance the greateſt of all Abſurdities. For, if that were the Caſe, every Atom, every Grain of Sand, muſt neceſſarily be a Thinking Being, or, if thou wilt, a Thinking Modification;

How oft the hardeſt Rock diſſolves, nor bears
The Strength but of a few, tho' Pow'rful Years.
Now if that Rock, for endleſs Ages paſt,
Stood ſtill ſecure; if it was free from Waſte;
Why ſhou'd it fall; why now diſſolve at laſt?

for

for 'tis as impossible, that a Thinking Substance should be composed of Unthinking Parts, as it is for an Extended Substance to be composed of Parts not extended: Therefore if the Universe be a Thinking Substance, there must necessarily be Thought in its minutest Parts, and by Consequence in all its pretended Modifications, of what Size and Shape soever they are. 'Tis impertinent to say, that Thought has no Action or Power, but in certain Modifications. A Grain of Sand being a Part of the Thinking Substance, as well as a Man, these two different Modifications must necessarily be alike vested, both with Thought and a Moving Power, because 'tis impossible, that a Thinking Substance can be composed of any Part which does not think, and because it wou'd be as contrary to its Essence, as it would be to the Nature of an Extended Substance, that there should be any of those Parts without Extension: These are two Things that are equally repugnant, and directly opposite to the clearest Notions.

Consider then, Dear *Sieou-Tcheou*, what Absurdities flow from the System of the *Spinosists*; reflect, that, in pursuance of their Hypothesis, all the Grains of Sand in the Sea must be little Deities, Thinking and Intelligent, which are little Portions of the Great God. What Notions, what pitiful Speculations are these! The Stupidity of the *Spinosists*, who think that the Universe is God himself, seems to me to be as great as that of the *Chinese* Doctors, who believe that a blind Power governs the World, and tho' without knowing it, does what requires the most perfect Understanding. I don't know, Dear *Sieou Tcheou*, which of the two Men is the blindest, either he who thinks that Order and Regularity were produc'd, and are continued by Confusion, or he who makes Gods of all the Atoms,

and

and admits a Syſtem whereby he is obliged to make all the Sands of the Sea to think.

Theſe, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, are the Arguments that clearly demonſtrate to me the Exiſtence of a Firſt Intelligent Principle more powerful than Matter, which gave to the Univerſe its Form, which continues it by its Power, and which regulates all Events by its Intelligence, 'Tis true, that in theſe Events I perceive ſome which don't appear to me to be regular, but contrary to the Ideas which I form to myſelf of Order; but I ought to ſuppoſe, that if my Knowledge was not ſo limited, I ſhould diſcover that what I look upon as an Evil is a real Good; becauſe 'tis evident, that a Sovereignly Wiſe Intelligence could not be the Origin of Evil. Let us be perſuaded, that every thing which is, is Good, and that what in one particular Man appears to be Evil, is in the general a real Good. Thoſe Misfortunes, thoſe Deaths, thoſe Pains form an Accord and a Harmony, of which our poor Genius's cannot know the perfect Beauty. What appears to us to be Diſorder, is magnificent Order; and what we call a particular Evil, is a univerſal Good. Let us not doubt of it, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, becauſe we are ſure of the Exiſtence of an Intelligent Being Sovereignly Wiſe; and that every thing which happens, only happens by his Command, and by his Will and Pleaſure.

Farewel; and return, if poſſible, from thy Error. But I will teaze thee no longer with my Advice; this is the laſt Time I ſhall talk to thee upon this Subject.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

DEAR *Yn-Che-Chan*, philoſophical Syſtems ſucceed one another here, as faſt as the different Modes of Women's Head-dreſſes, and as eaſily grown out of Faſhion; Nay, the Splendour of a Gawz-Cornet does not paſs away ſo ſoon as the Reputation of a philoſophical Hypotheſis.

A few Years ago, the *French* were blindly and extravagantly fond of the Opinions of *Ariſtotle*, but abandon'd them all on a ſudden for thoſe of one of their Countrymen call'd *Deſcartes*, ſeveral of whoſe Works have been lent thee by the Miſſionaries. This *Deſcartes* changed all Animals into Machines; according to him, an Elephant was no more than Clock-work, compounded of Fleſh and Bone, as that which ſhews the Hour of the Day, is made of Copper and Iron. All *Frenchmen* adopted ſo ſenſeleſs an Opinion, becauſe it was new, or at leaſt had the Air of Novelty. There was nothing ſo comical, as to ſee a Man whip and ſpur his Horſe like a Madman, 'till he roſe up an End, or kick'd up his Heels and gallop'd, and to hear him proteſt ſeri-

seriously that the Creature felt his Stripes no more than a Stone.

Descartes's Disciples even went farther than their Master; they invented new Modes of Philosophy; for is it possible to give any other Name to ridiculous Opinions, which could never be once maintain'd were it not for the sake of their Novelty? *Descartes* did not allow Brutes to have a Soul*; and *Mallebranche* would not allow Human Beings to have Bodies, pretending it was impossible to prove they had one.

When the *French* thought themselves all meerly Intelligent Beings, and tho' they had eat and drank plentifully, pretended to be ignorant whether they had Bodies, one *Locke*, an *Englishman*, started up, who turned the Mode of Antomalous, or Self-moving Creatures and Immaterial Men, out of Doors. Nay, he did more than this; for contrary to *Mallebranche*, whose Notion was, that Men were intirely Spiritual, he pretended they were wholly Material, and immediately a Number of *Parisians* became Corporal in a two-fold Sense.

But they were not of this Opinion long; for a *German*, nam'd *Leibnitz*, metamorphos'd them into little *Animalcules*, that never die, but grow bigger by means of a foreign Matter, which when it is dissolv'd, confounded, and divided, nevertheless does not occasion the Destruction of the little *Animalcule*, which is Immortal and Unchangeable. Thou would'st not believe, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, how many *Frenchmen* there are at this Day, who think themselves a hundred times more delicate and tender, than the minutest Hand-worm, and will tell you with a very confident Air, *We shall never dye, for*

* Some of the eminent Philosophers deny'd also that Beasts had a Soul.

the

the Animal having been always alive and organis'd, always continues such. In order to kill all these immortal *Frenchmen*, there is nothing wanting, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, but a new-fashion'd System; the Duration of their little Individual depends on the Capriciousness of the first Metaphysician that shall publish his Opinions, and then the Eternal *Animalcule* will be annihilated, or perhaps metamorphos'd into a Spiritual Substance.

The Course of Hypotheses in Natural Philosophy, is neither slower nor more uniform than that of Metaphysical Systems. Within these twenty Years, the Order and Rule of the Universe have changed two or three times. *Descartes* made an infinite Number of Worlds swim in a subtle Matter; and all those Worlds plentifully furnish'd, as ours is, with Sun, Moon, and Stars, were inviron'd each with a Vortex of Matter extremely thin and light, which ran all as fast as they could into an immense and infinite Fluid.

But at present all this is chang'd: An *Englishman* has by his Omnipotence destroy'd all those Vortexes, he has annihilated the Fluid which kept them up, and has establish'd an immense Vacuum, in which he makes the Stars roll at their Ease, without any thing to incommode their Course. And, as for the Planets and Comets, the former being placed in different Circles, round one and the same Centre, and the latter in Circles, that are unequal, excentric, and differently directed, perform their Revolutions quietly.

To this new Creator, as it were, of the Universe, some natural Philosophers objected, that, without a particular Cause, it was impossible that a Body could always preserve its circular Motion, because every Body, as soon as it's free, or not restrain'd by any external Matter, runs in a strait Line, which removes

removes it from the Centre of its Motion; a Law one of the moſt certain in Nature, and the moſt obſerv'd by the Natural Philoſophers. It ſeems therefore as if the Planets had for a long time ceas'd their circular Motion, and by deſcribing a ſtrait Line, have gone to pay a Viſit to the fix'd Stars.

But this Objection did not puzzle the *Engliſhman*; for he immediately gave to Matter a new Quality, call'd *Attraction*, by which the Stars have a continual Tendency towards the Centre of their Motion. He order'd all Bodies to attract each other mutually, according to their Size, or to uſe his own Terms, according to the *Inverſion of their Square of Diſtance*. From that time all Bodies gravitated to one another, and mutually attracted each other by the inviolable and unalterable Laws of Attraction; they drew the common Centre about which they turn'd, and were in their Turn attracted by that very Centre. The ſame Rules were eſtabliſhed, when all the Bodies which turn round a Centre, come to turn with that particular Centre round a Centre, equally common to other Bodies. In this Caſe, the common Centre equally attracts all particular Bodies and Centres, and is alſo by them attracted. Thus is the Harmony of the Univerſe explain'd by this univerſal Law.

The Planets and all the Cœleſtial Bodies gravitate upon one another, by mutually attracting each other, according to the Inverſion of the Square of their Diſtance. Every one of *Saturn*'s five Satellites gravitates to the other four, and the other four upon it; all the five gravitate to *Saturn*, which is their particular Centre. *Saturn* too gravitates to them; and all the Stars gravitate to the Sun their general Centre, as do the other Planets. The Sun gravitates in its Turn to all the Bodies that gravitate

to

to it; and 'tis this same Gravitation, or mutual Attraction, which is the only Cause of the Regularity of the cœleſtial Motions, and all thoſe Miracles which, till now, were always reckon'd impenetrable Myſteries.

Notwithſtanding this Attraction ſo neceſſary to the *Engliſhman*'s Syſtem, and which he had created ſo *a-propos*, his Adverſaries pretended, that even ſuppoſing there were that Power of mutual Attraction in Bodies, it would be impoſſible it ſhould be the Cauſe of the Regularity of the cœleſtial Motions, becauſe Gravity giving the Stars a Tendency which directs them inceſſantly towards the Centre of their Revolution, they muſt have been abſorb'd therein long ago, and conſum'd by the Sun.

This Reflection ſeem'd a little perplexing to the *Engliſhman*; but he again made uſe of his Creating Power. He gave a ſecond Direction to the Stars; the one perpendicular, cauſed by the Attraction which carried them to the Centre of their Revolution; and the other horizontal, which removed them from it. Conſequently the Stars being forc'd to obey thoſe different Directions, and yet not able to follow either intirely, were oblig'd to ſplit the Difference, and choſe to deſcribe a Circle. If the *Engliſhman* had been contradicted again, he would have given a third Direction to the cœleſtial Globes, and a fourth too, if his Syſtem had requir'd it.

Nothing puzzles the *European* Philoſophers.—*Deſcartes* created Vortexes of all Sizes and Faſhions. The *Engliſhman*, I have been telling thee of, has occult Qualities always in Readineſs. If Attraction don't anſwer his Purpoſe, to this firſt ſecret Virtue he adds a ſecond, which removes Bodies to a greater Diſtance,

Distance, and this he calls a *Repelling Force* *. Consequently with these two Qualities, there is nothing but what he explains, even to the obscure Mysteries of Chymistry. For Example, *Aqua fortis* dissolves Silver, but has no Effect upon Gold; because an *attractive Virtue*, that is to say, Attraction draws all the Power of the *Aqua fortis* into the Interstices and Pores of Silver; whereas another secret Virtue, the *Repelling Force*, renders the Action of the same *Aqua fortis* upon Gold, of no Effect.

These occult and renew'd Qualities of the *Grecians*, were not relish'd universally, but the Novelty has made the *Europeans* every whit as fond of them, as it has of all the Systems. The Friends of the *English* Philosopher think such as contradict their Master very silly; for there is nothing, *say they*, so certain, clear and evident, as those Opinions. To prove them, they immediately present you with a Dozen Quires of Paper full of Cyphers. "Here, *say they*, is enough to convince Unbelievers, and open the Eyes of the Ignorant. Let them diligently consider these *Algebraic* Calculations, and nicely adjust the Observations made upon Attraction, it will appear, that either *Newton* has calculated to no Manner of Purpose, or that the World is as he makes it. Now, where the Calculation is admitted, clear and distinct Ideas must vanish; by that which *Newton* makes, it follows, that there must have been an immense Vacuum; therefore those evident Notions must be renounc'd, which plainly shew us that a Foot of Extension may change its Situation, and that 'tis impossible it should be in the same Place as another Foot of Extension."

* *Ubi attractio definit, ibi vis repellens succedere debet.* Newton. Optic. p. 338.

How

How harſh ſoever theſe Opinions ſeem to be, either a Man muſt approve them, or he is ſure to be treated with Contempt and Abuſe by the *Newtonians*; for they even out-do the *Carteſians*, who treated the *Peripatetics*, their Predeceſſors, with inſupportable Arrogance; and now the *Newtoniſts* pay them in the ſame Coin.

I was t'other Day at the hearing of a ſmart Diſpute between a *Carteſian* and a *Newtoniſt*. After having ſpoke for ſome time with a great deal of Warmth, they fell to hard Words, and from thence to Blows. The *Newtonian* having ſaid, That *Deſcartes* was an Ignoramus, the Diſciple of that Philoſopher reply'd in a Paſſion, *You lie*. *I lie*, ſaid the *Newtonian*, *You are a Raſcal*. Upon this, the *Carteſian* ran at his Antagoniſt and gave him a Slap in the Face. A Coffee-houſe happening to be the Field of Battle, People flock'd about the Combatants to part them. After their firſt Fury was abated, they endeavoured to make them Friends. As the *Newtonian* complain'd ſadly of the Blow he had received; *You muſt forgive your Adverſary for it*, ſaid a merry Gentleman who was at that Comedy, *he was determin'd to it by a ſuperior Force; the Attraction has acted upon both you and him, in Proportion to the Inverſion of your Squares of Diſtance; and by Misfortune the Repelling Force happening to fail, you attracted him with ſuch Violence, that he fell foul of you, and form'd a ſtrait Line towards the Centre, inſtead of artfully deſcribing a Circle, as he would have unavoidably done, if the ſecond Direction had not unhappily fail'd him.* This Jeſt reviv'd the Fury of the *Newtonian*, and the Clamour was renew'd; ſo that whereas the Quarrel was before only between two Perſons, now a third had a Share in it: But at length, after a great deal of Pains, Matters were heal'd

heal'd up, as much as they were before the Joke renew'd the Contention; there was a second Treaty of Peace, and it was concluded with a full and intire Liberty to the adverse Parties to persist in their Sentiments.

I was very much astonish'd, as thou may'st imagine, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, at the Scene, of which I had been a Spectator. I could not conceive, how those that seem'd to be Men of Sense, should yet be so void of it as to quarrel about any philosophical Hypotheses. My Surprize was doubled upon the Approach of a Man of good Sense to me, who said, "You see, Sir, those two Persons "that have been so warmly disputing, will per- "haps in a Day or two be altogether as much "for condemning the two Opinions that have "been the Ground of their Quarrel; for which "there needs nothing more than the Publication "of some new System. 'Tis not three Months "yet, since the zealous *Newtonian* would have "lain down his Life for the Honour of *Descartes*; "but he has abandon'd his old Master, because he "thought his new one more in the Fashion."

Woe be to those Systems, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, which grow old with the *Europeans*, who cry them down for those very things which they extol in the new ones. The occult Qualities of *Aristotle* are laugh'd at every Day in *Europe*; and yet those of *Newton* are spoke of with Admiration; for what is Attraction, if it be not a more occult Quality than all those of the *Peripatetics*?

Farewel.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

From CHOANG *at* Ispahan *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

IN my last, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I gave thee an Account of the Jealousy of the *Persians*, and of their Precautions, for keeping their Wives honest. I will now acquaint thee what sort of Life they make them lead in their Seraglio's, and how many different Kinds there are of 'em.

The Customs of the *Persians* in their Marriages differ in many Things from those of the *Chinese*. At *Pekin*, according to the Laws, they can have but one lawful Wife. 'Tis true, they are permitted to have several Concubines; but they are under an intire Dependance, and even the Children that are born of those Concubines are deem'd to belong to her that is the legal Wife. These Laws seem to me, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, to be very wise, and much more reasonable than those of the *Europeans*, who being allowed no more than one Wife, are very often punished for their Wives Defects and Crimes; if they are barren, they are for ever depriv'd of the dear Name of Father; and if they have any material Blemish, all their Children are the worse for it.

But

But in *China*, all these Inconveniencies are prevented, by permitting the Use of Concubines besides the lawful Wife. Their Condition has nothing scandalous in it, as it is in *Europe*; for they are look'd upon as second-hand Wives, that make Amends for the Deficiency of the first. In this the *Persians* have imitated the wise Laws of the *Chinese*, but they have not observed the chief of all; for, besides Concubines, they allow the marrying of four lawful Wives, who have the same Power, and as extensive Prerogatives. Such a Custom cannot be but productive of a Multitude of Family-brawls, it being impossible but every oue of those Wives will try to domineer over the others. In my Opinion, it should be with a private Man's Seraglio, just as it is in a Monarchical State; that is, there ought to be but one Head, to whom all the rest should be obedient; for without this wise Rule, Confusion and Disorder will banish Peace and Union.

What a sad Life must a Man have, who is obliged to lead it with four Wives whose mutual Jealousy is the continual Cause of Quarrel? The *Europeans* say, they have enough to do to bear with the Humours of only one lawful Wife; but what would they say if they had four?

The *Persians* are themselves very sensible of the Inconveniencies attending the Liberty of marrying four Wives, and therefore seldom or never use it. And for another Reason, besides the Love of Peace and Tranquillity, they seldom have more than one lawful Wife; and that is, the extravagant Expences of Matrimony, which are often the Ruin of those of the best Fortunes; and therefore we see many of their private Men, and even substantial Merchants, who absolutely have to do with no Women but Concubines or Slaves. Since all the Children they

get are lawful as well as in *China*, 'tis of no great Importance to a *Persian* to have a Son by his own Wife.

They have another Custom at *Ispahan*, which is seldom or ever known at *Pekin*. Thou knoweſt few of our Countrymen that take *Women by the Hire*. This is a Word that we seem to have no Notion of; tho', in the main, the Term is applicable to Concubines, that are taken to have Children by them, and afterwards turn'd off. But after all, this is not stipulated by any Contract; whereas in *Persia*, they hire a Woman, just like a Houſe, for a whole Year, for six Months, for a Day, or if they pleaſe, but for an Hour. The Hire of theſe Women is not very chargeable, since a Man may have one that is very pretty, and young too, for 450 Livres a Year. 'Tis true, that ſhe muſt be fed, and cloathed into the Bargain; but that's no great Matter, and amounts to little more than the keeping of a good Horſe. The Contract with theſe Women muſt be made before a Judge; and if at the Expiration of the Term, the two Parties are both pleaſed, they may make a freſh Bargain; but if their Tempers can't agree, they part; and the Woman is not allowed to let herſelf out again till forty Days after their Separation, which is a Space of Time preſcrib'd to give Reſpite to a Soil which is ſuppoſed to have been worn out, that it may be the better able, after ſuch Refreſhment, to bear new Fruit. Perhaps too, this Cuſtom owes its Birth to the Jealouſy of the *Perſians*, who never care that a Woman who has been in their Arms, ſhould ever fall into the Embraces of another Man. What would induce me to think that thoſe forty Days are as much devoted to Jealouſy as to *Purification*, is, that if a Man of Quality bargains for a Woman,

he hires her for fourſcore Years. The *Perſians* own, they take ſo long a Leaſe, becauſe no other Man may enjoy a Woman that has ſerv'd them. Perhaps, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, thou wilt ask, How it comes to paſs that a Man who takes a Wife for ſo long a Time, which is commonly longer than the Term of Human Life, does not marry her for his whole Life? I muſt tell thee, that there are two Reaſons for this Proceeding which at firſt View appears ſo whimſical: The firſt is, that if they are married to a Woman of Quality, her Parents would think it as an Affront that ſhe ſhould be aſſociated to a Perſon of mean Birth; the ſecond is, the vaſt Expences of compleat Marriages, that I have already mentioned, which are even much more conſiderable among the Nobility than private Perſons.

Methinks, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, as the *Perſians* have a Prerogative to keep Concubines and Slaves, they ſhould have no Occaſion for introducing a third Cuſtom between the Uſe of thoſe Women, and that of lawful Wives; a Practice which view it in what Light you pleaſe, is of no Uſe. Be a Man rich, he may have two hundred Concubines; to what Purpoſe then ſhould he marry one or two Women for five or ſix Months? You are to obſerve, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that he never ſet Eyes on them, and that therefore he cannot be determined to the Choice by Love. We take Concubines at *Pekin* to ſupply the Deficiency of our lawful Wives; but we ſtop there, and don't offer to invent a uſeleſs Kind of Marriage.

I think there is ſomething whimſical in this *Perſian* Cuſtom; and that 'tis the more ſo, becauſe that Complaiſance is not to be expected in thoſe Ladies they hire, as in Wives, that are ſo for Life, or even in Concubines. A Woman, who is to

paſs

her whole Life with a Man, endeavours to ſuit herſelf to his Temper, and ſtrives to gain his Affections, as knowing that her Happineſs depends on the Complaiſance and Love ſhe finds in a Huſband, with whom ſhe is to live and dye. But a Woman, who knows, that at the End of the Year, 'tis at her own Option whether ſhe will have any more to do with her Husband, does what ſhe pleaſes. She cares very little after what Manner ſhe behaves to the Perſon whom ſhe is ſoon to abandon; ſo that ſhe has all the vain and fantaſtical Airs of Wives that are for Life, without any of their Behaviour that is engaging and reſpectful. I look upon ſuch a Woman in a Family, to be like a Footman, who is ſure his Maſter will diſcharge him at his Journey's End, and therefore gives himſelf very little Concern about his Equipage, but rather thinks how to find out a new Maſter when he comes to Town. So am I certain, that a Proſtitute who lets herſelf out for Hire, thinks of nothing for the laſt three or four Months of her Time, but what Bargain to make with the next Man that is to be her Husband.

The Concubines are as much obliged to endeavour to gain the Friendſhip of their Keepers, as the lawful Wives that of their Husbands, the greateſt Honour they can attain to, being that of receiving their Keeper in their Arms. As ſoon as they have this Happineſs, they quit their former ſervile State of Slaves, become the Mothers of a lawful Heir of the Family, and are attended, lodg'd, and clad as well as the lawful Wives. Are not theſe Advantages ſufficient to oblige the Women to be complaiſant, and to ſtrive to do all they can to obtain them?

The more I conſider the Uſe of thoſe mercenary Proſtitutes, I think the worſe of it; and

that 'tis not only unneceſſary, but blameable and even pernicious to the Quiet of the Men. The *Chineſe* Laws are in this Reſpect infinitely wiſer, by not admitting of theſe Bargains for a Time, which give a Woman for a certain Term all the Prerogatives of a Wife, without obliging her to have the Qualities neceſſary for the Happineſs of the Husband.

The *Perſians* ought to be more fearful of the Temper and Diſpoſition of a Woman, who can be under no Tye of Reſtraint, becauſe the Life which the Fair-Sex leads in the Seraglio, inſpires a certain Indolence, or luke-warm Indifference, which by degrees ſtifles all Sentiments of Virtue and Generoſity. The Women at *Iſpahan* are far from thinking like thoſe of *Pekin*, and not near ſo ſuſceptible of the Love of Glory; they only think of what may pleaſe their Senſes; for they ſtretch themſelves all Day long upon their Sofa's, and to have their Legs and Backs chafed and ſcratch'd by a young Slave, is one great Pleaſure of the *Perſian* Ladies. Then as for manual Operations, they very ſeldom do any Work, ſo luxurious is the Indolence in which the Men indulge them; and if you do but ask the Men the Reaſon of this extraordinary Conduct of theirs, they ſay, That God made Women for the Pleaſure of Men, and that 'tis reaſonable they in their Turn ſhould make them eaſy: Conſequently almoſt all the embroider'd Works, the Linnen Cloth, Tapeſtry, in ſhort, every thing which our Wives do in *China*, is work'd here by the Men.

We look upon our Wives at *Pekin* as faithful Companions, that help to bear the Weight of our domeſtic Affairs, eaſe us in the Incumbrances of a Family, and help us in the Education of our Children, and we are pleaſed to find they think after

after the same Manner that we do. But at *Ispahan*, where they are only valued by the Men for gratifying their Lust; where their Genius, their Cunning, and their Knowlege are despised, they perfectly answer the Notion that's form'd of them; and by being heartily despised, they are accustom'd to render themselves truly worthy of the lowest Contempt. The indolent, idle Lives they lead, give them all the Leisure when they are by themselves, to invent the most criminal Stratagems for gratifying their Hatred, Jealousy, Revenge, or Love. They have Recourse to Poison, to get rid of their Rivals; to Philtres, to procure the Love of their Husbands, or Keepers; and they make use of dangerous Remedies to render the other Women barren. The *Few* Women who come to the Seraglio's to sell Handkerchiefs, Toys and Perfumes, vend poisonous Liquors under that Pretence, for which they have a good Price. Those Wretches connive at the Crimes of all the young Women with whom they can ingratiate themselves. Judge now, Dear *Tn-Che-Chan*, whether a Man can be reckon'd happy, who passes his Life in a Company of *Medea's*, whose Treasons 'tis hardly in his Power to prevent; for, in spite of all Precautions, they are so dissembling and so artful, having no other Business nor Care, but to intrigue, that they are almost sure of gaining their Ends. Three Fourths of the *Persians*, especially they who have many Wives, mind nothing in their Seraglio but what Punishments to inflict on them for Crimes which they have committed, or such as they know they intended to commit. Some are shut up in dark Prisons; others whipp'd with Rods, and sometimes beat with Canes. The Ennuchs are the Executioners: These barbarous Men, if they deserve that Name, who have neither the

most essential Parts, nor real Qualities of Men, are glad to be revenged of the Sex for the Evil done to them in their Childhood, that they might be made their Guardians with Safety.

If, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, there was an absolute Necessity to choose either the *Persian* or the *European* Customs, I should not scruple to choose the latter; at least the too great Liberty they give to their Wives is not a perpetual Source of Vexation to them; whereas the Slavery in which the *Persians* keep their Wives, daily gives them a thousand Torments. Between these two Excesses, our Countrymen the *Chinese* have chose a just Medium; and whoever will, without Prejudice, examine our Customs as to Marriage and Women, will be forced to confess, let him be of what Nation he will, that they are the wisest in the Universe.

Farewel.

LETTER XIX.

From KIEOU-CHE *at* Nagasaki *to* SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris.

DEAR *Sioeu-Tcheou*, two Days ago I arrived at *Nagasaki*, the only Town of *Japan* that Foreigners are allow'd to come to. Even the *Chinese*, tho' the old Friends and Allies of the *Japonese*, are not exempt from this Rule; and all Nations are alike shut out of *Japan*. The *Dutch* and

and *Chineſe* indeed, by ſpecial Favour, have the Liberty of coming to *Nagaſaki* to trade; but while they are there, they are treated more like Priſoners than Freemen intitled to the Laws of Nations and of Hoſpitality.

Thou wilt perhaps be curious to know the true Cauſe, why the *Japoneſe* reſolved to exclude all Foreigners out of their Country. I can eaſily ſatisfy thee, having been fully acquainted with it ſince my Arrival here; and I can tell thee beforehand, that of all the Reaſons which the Miſſionaries in *China* give for their Baniſhment, three-fourths are falſe. They are in the right to conceal the true Cauſes, for fear leſt their Conduct ſhould be ſuſpected, and leſt they ſhould be drove out of *China*, as well as *Japan*; which indeed may be the Caſe one Day or other, for the preſent Emperor has begun to take away many of their Privileges; and it looks as if he had Thoughts of baniſhing them quite out of his Dominions.

But to return to the Reaſon for baniſhing all the *European*, *Indian*, and *Aſiatic* Nations from *Japan*. The *Japoneſe* had long complained of the Pride and Avarice of the *Portugueſe*, who had been ſettled in the Kingdom for many Years, and treated with all the Civility poſſible. But weary of that Conſtraint, and that Life of Simplicity and Poverty, which they ſaid they came to recommend to the *Japoneſe*, they pull'd off the Mask, and abandon'd themſelves wholly to their Temper. The Clergy being proud and haughty, as thou muſt have perceived 'em to be ſince thou haſt been in *France*, thinking themſelves already abſolute Maſters of the Country, ſhook off all Regard for the greateſt Noblemen. A *Portugueſe* Pontiff, whom the *Europeans* call a *Biſhop*, meeting one of the chief Mandarins of the King-

dom upon the Road, not only did not go out of his Chaise, as he ought to have done by the established Rules and Laws of the Country, but passed proudly by him, without paying him the least Compliment. The Mandarin was provok'd at so gross an Affront, and complained bitterly of it to the Emperor, who being already exasperated at the *Portugueſe*, and vex'd that their Missionaries should preach up a new Religion incompatible with those that were already establish'd, which produc'd Enmities and Jealousies, that sooner or later could not fail of disturbing the Tranquillity of *China*, caused an Edict to be published, which forbad the Christian Doctrines to be taught hereafter, and ordered the *Portugueſe* to recal their Missionaries, and to send no more.

But this Edict was not strictly put in Execution. The *Portugueſe* pour'd in fresh Recruits of Priests, while the old ones concealed themselves with the *Japoneſe* of their Religion; and in time every thing might have been in *Stato quo*, and the *Portugueſe* might have recover'd the Friendship of the *Japoneſe*; but instead of acting cunningly, and furling the Sails well during the Storm, they became as insolent and vain as ever. Certain Priests, that were sent by the Governor of *Manila* in Quality of Ambassadors to the Emperor of *Japan*, preached publickly at *Macao*, tho' he had desired them to do no such thing, and tho' even the Jesuits, as I was told by the *Japaneſe*, from whom I have the Story, charged those Priests not to disobey the Emperor's Orders. Herein I acknowledge their Policy, and I am inclin'd to believe that they had no Share in this last Folly of the *Portugueſe*. Be it as it will, the Priests flatly disobey'd; such a Contempt of the Orders of the Sovereign, not only incensed the Emperor, but

but made the whole Empire revolt. The Hatred conceived againſt the *Portugueſe* prov'd fatal to all who profeſs'd their Religion.

The thing which compleated the Averſion of the *Japoneſe* to all Chriſtians, was the Diſcovery of a Conſpiracy of the *Portugueſe*, and the Proſelytes they had made in the Country againſt the Emperor's Life. In order to give a Sanction to their Crime, they pretended, that for the Advancement of their Religion, it was lawful for them to put a Monarch to Death, whom they call an *Idolater*. Judge, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, what will be the Fate of the Miſſionaries in *China*, if ever it ſhould come to be known there, that they are capable of maintaining ſo abominable an Opinion. I doubt not, but they would do the ſame thing with us, as they attempted in *Japan*, if they had a fair Opportunity. I own to thee, that I always miſtruſted their Sham-Civility, and can't conceive how our Friend *Yn-Che-Chan*, can be ſo fond of them as he ſeems to be. If he loves the Miſſionaries for the Sake only of the Sciences, he might find the ſame Accompliſhments in many other *Europeans*, who are much more ſincere in their Opinion; and rather than have Acquaintance with the Miſſionaries, I ſhould chooſe that of the Merchant of *Nantes*, to whom we are obliged for the reading of ſome *French* Books that are worth more than all that were ever put into our Hands by the Miſſionaries, which for the Generality ſeem ſo inſipid and nauſeous. We ſhould have no true Knowledge of *Europe*, if we knew nothing more of it than what we have learnt from the Miſſionaries or their Books. Thou muſt needs know this thyſelf. As for my part, the Converſation I had with the *Dutch*, and what I had at *Pekin* with the *Engliſh*, have really opened my Eyes.

I return, Dear *Sieou Tcheou*, to ſpeak of the Conſpiracy which cauſed the total Deſtruction of the *Portugueſe*, and was diſcovered by the *Dutch*. The latter ſettled in *Japan*, notwithſtanding the Calumnies with which they were blacken'd by the *Portugueſe*, who gave them out to be Pyrates and Robbers. Theſe falſe Accuſations, and theſe new Attempts which were made by the *Portugueſe* every Day to deſtroy their Commerce, put them upon contriving all Manner of Means to deſtroy Enemies ſo dangerous; and Fortune furniſh'd them with an Opportunity, of which they made a lucky Uſe. Near the *Cape of Good Hope* they made themſelves Maſters of a *Portugueſe* Ship, homeward-bound to *Lisbon*. In this Ship, they found Letters which one *Moro* a *Japoneſe*, a zealous Chriſtian, and Chief of the *Portugueſe* that were ſettled in *Japan*, wrote to the King of *Portugal*, to inform him of the State of the Conſpiracy againſt the Life of the Emperor, and to deſire him to ſend him the Ships that he had promiſed him, that he might finiſh what he had begun. The Names of the chief Conſpirators were in this Letter, with a long Petition for obtaining the *Roman* Pontiff's Bleſſing on the Maſſacre of the Emperor and his Courtiers.

The *Dutch* were too much irritated againſt the *Portugueſe* not to make uſe of this Letter. Moreover their Honour was concerned in ſaving the Life of a Prince, who had given them a thouſand Marks of Goodneſs and Friendſhip. They ſent the Letter to the Prince *Firando*, who communicated it to the Court. Imagine, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, the Surprize and Indignation of the Emperor; all the *Portugueſe* at *Nagaſaki* were apprehended, and Captain *Moro* was burnt alive. While the Criminals were under Proſecution, a *Japoneſe* Ship intercepted

tercepted a second Letter from the said Captain *Moro*, written to the *Portugueſe* Commandant at *Macao*, which confirm'd every thing that had been diſcover'd by the former.

The Reſolution which was then put in Execution at *Japan*, would have been form'd in any other Country of the World. All Foreigners were baniſhed for ever out of the Kingdom, except the *Dutch*, to whom they had been obliged for their Intelligence, and except the *Chineſe*, for the ſake of the ancient Alliance with them, and the Arts which they had brought with them, as well as the Sciences which they had taught the *Japoneſe*. They were alſo willing to hinder the Natives of the Country from going to foreign Nations, being apprehenſive that the leaſt Converſation with People capable of committing the worſt of Crimes, and of deſiring the Head of their Religion to bleſs them, juſt as they were about to aſſaſſinate their Sovereign in the Midſt of his Dominions, would corrupt their Morals, and extinguiſh their virtuous Inclinations. Therefore they ſhut up the Kingdom, as well to keep the Inhabitants in, as Foreigners out; the Arrival of the one, and the Departure of the other, being prohibited on pain of Death.

This Law is moſt ſtrictly obſerved to this very Day. The Hatred of the *Japoneſe* to the *Portugueſe* extended after they were all baniſhed, to the Natives of the Country who had embraced their Religion. They were cruelly perſecuted, made to ſuffer the moſt barbarous Puniſhment; and in a word, there were no Sorts of Cruelty but what were inflicted upon thoſe unhappy Victims of the Pride, Avarice, and Treachery of the *Portugueſe*. Their own Countrymen, as criminal in their Turn as the *Europeans* whom they had baniſh'd, waſh'd their Hands in their Blood with inſatiable Fury.

Such a Course of Barbarity made the unfortunate Wretches at last rise in Arms. Near 40000 perceiving that there was a Design to put them to Death by Fire, by the Gallows, and by the most horrid Tortures, and being unable, notwithstanding their Submission, to live at Quiet in any Place of Retirement, were resolved to sell their Lives dearly to their Executioners. And who, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, could blame their Design? When all the Laws of Humanity are violated, Men are excused from the common Rules, and from the Oaths they have sworn: A Tyrant is no longer a King. If I defend my Life against a *Barbarian* that would take it away, so far am I from disobeying the Laws of Subordination, that I do but follow those of Nature which have existed from all Time; whereas the others only commenc'd when Men began to be criminal, and when there was a Necessity of punishing them to secure the Peace of the Society.

The 40000 Christians retir'd to an old Fortress, call'd *Arima*, being resolved to defend themselves to the last Extremity. There the Sovereign besieged them with a Design to extirpate them intirely, and partly by the Assistance of the *Dutch* he gain'd his Point. Hitherto thou hast seen those *Europeans* observe an unblameable Conduct in all the different Events that happen'd during those dangerous Storms; but in this last Instance, they render'd themselves almost as guilty in the Eyes of the World, as the *Portugueſe*, whom, with so much Reason, they had banished. One *Kockebecker*, a *Dutch* Commander, came to Anchor with a Man of War near the Town that was besieged, and out of a base Complaisance to the Emperor, caused above 500 Cannot-Shot to be fir'd against the Town. He also gave six Pieces of Artillery, which were

were employ'd on a Battery that had been erected aſhore. In fine, the fatal Aſſiſtance of the *Dutch* prov'd the Deſtruction of 40000 Perſons, who believ'd in the ſame God as themſelves, and who were only perſecuted on Account of that Faith.

Heaven, which is always juſt, and avenges wicked Actions, did not ſuffer the baſe and mean Complaiſance of the *Dutch* to be attended with the Fruit which they expected from it. The *Japoneſe* Miniſters, inſtead of loving them the better for it, abated their Eſteem for them, and they aſcrib'd to dangerous Politics and an inſatiable Thirſt after Gold, what the *Dutch* would have to be conſtrued as the Effect of their Submiſſion to the Orders of the Prince, and of their Attachment to his Perſon. It was even debated, whether the *Dutch* ſhould not take their Turn to be baniſhed as well as the *Portugueſe*. A fine Leſſon this for ſuch as, in Hopes of an uncertain Reward, abandon themſelves to the moſt odious Exceſſes. They ought to conſider, that tho' Men may love the Treaſon for the ſake of the Advantage they may reap from it, they nevertheleſs hate the Traitor. The *Japoneſe* Miniſters were afraid, that the ſame Intereſt which made the *Dutch* take Arms *againſt the poor People, who followed the ſame Religion, and entered Heaven at the ſame Gate*, might ſome time or other make them Enemies to the ſame Prince whom they had ſerved. In fine, notwithſtanding theſe Reflections, a Senſe of Gratitude prevailed over Fear: The *Dutch* were permitted to continue their Traffic; but they were confined to a little Iſland near *Nagaſacki*, which is the only Place where they are allowed to ſtay; ſo that inſtead of having more Freedom, it diminiſhes every Day, their obedient Behaviour only ſerving to increaſe the Jealouſy and Diffidence of the *Portugueſe*. The Iſland where they

they are, is shut in all round by Deal-boards. This Prison, for can such a Place be call'd by any other Name, is but 600 Foot long and 200 broad, and not a Soul can go into it, or come out of it, without an Order from the Governour of *Nagasaki*. Nor are Boats from the Town suffer'd to go to it; so that if they were Prisoners, who had committed the most enormous Crimes, they could not be guarded more strictly.

The *Chinese* too, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, are now as much under Constraint as the *Dutch*. They have likewise lost all their ancient Privileges, for Reasons which thou shalt have in my next. It would therefore be impossible for me to gratify thy Curiosity, and to satisfy my own, if the Memorials with which I am charged for the Ministers of State, did not procure me the Advantage of being conducted to *Jedo*, the Capital of the Kingdom. But when I shall set out for the Court I know not, considering the Multitude of Ceremonies that I must go thro', before the Diffidence of the *Japonese* can be remov'd.

Farewel.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

From KIEOU-CHE *at* Nagaſaki *to* SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris.

AS I promiſed thee in my laſt, I ſhall now, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, acquaint thee with the Reaſons that have obliged our old Friends and Allies the *Japoneſe*, to treat us as ſeverely as they have done the *Dutch*.

After the Diſcovery of the Conſpiracy I mentioned to thee, the *Spaniards* and the *Portugueſe* being intirely expell'd, and the *Dutch* confined to the little Iſland, where they ſtill remain, we were left at free Liberty to trade, and to import what Goods we pleaſed, and to ſell them to whom we would. 'Tis true, that *Nagaſaki* was the only Place where we might ſettle, and a proper Place enough was it for the ſolid and commodious Eſtabliſhment of our Commerce; and very happy would it have been for us, if Things had always remain'd on the ſame Footing; but it was decreed, that the *Portugueſe* ſhould do as much Hurt to the *Chineſe*, as they had done to all the other Nations. They came to ſettle among us, we received them, and they did not fail to ſend immediately for ſeveral Recruits of Miſſionaries. This Claſs of Men, who were born methinks to cauſe Diſturbances and Diviſions in the *Indies*, were no ſooner

ſooner returned to *Japan*, than they brib'd ſeveral *Chineſe* Merchants, and ſeveral Captains of Veſſels, to bring hither certain Books which treated of their Religion. By this Means they had like to have rekindled a Flame, which it had coſt ſo much Pains, as well as ſuch Torrents of Blood, to extinguiſh. This coming to the Knowledge of the *Japoneſe* Miniſters, they reſolved to put the *Chineſe* on the ſame Footing as the *Dutch*, and they even thought us more dangerous than the *Dutch*, becauſe we favour'd the cruel Enemies whom they had helped them to deſtroy. We were therefore depriv'd of all our Privileges, and I may venture to aſſure thee, Dear *Sieou-Tcheou*, that we are now more cramp'd and conſtrain'd than the *Dutch*, becauſe they fancy they have more to fear from us than from them.

" 'Tis ſtill believed, *ſaid a* Japoneſe *to me*, that " you bring ſome Packets from the Miſſionaries. " The Tranquillity which *Japan* enjoys now, not " only makes it the Intereſt of the Prince, but " of all the Subjects, to prevent every thing that " may have a Tendency to diſturb it. Now no- " thing is more likely to do ſo, than the Eſtabliſh- " ment of a Religion which permits the Dethron- " ing, and even Murder, of a King that profeſſes " another. There is not a *Japoneſe* but trembles " when he reads in the Annals of this Empire, " that the Chriſtians, who entered into a Con- " ſpiracy at the Inſtigation of the Miſſionaries, " begg'd a Bleſſing from their Sovereign Pontiff " for the Execution of ſuch an abominable De- " ſign. What Truſt can be repos'd in Men, who " pretend that their Religion exempts them from " the moſt ſacred Obligations, permits them to " violate their Oaths, to dethrone Sovereigns, to " ſtir up Civil Wars, when the Extenſion of Em-

" pire

" pire and of the Prerogatives of such Religion,
" is the Point in View? We would rather have
" the most resolute Villains among us, than the
" treacherous *Portugueſe* whom we have so happily
" got rid of; for as to the former, we should
" mistrust them, and might escape their wicked
" Designs. But how can we guard against those
" of the latter? Who would suspect that Men,
" who preach up nothing but Patience, Humi-
" lity, Obedience, the Contempt of Riches, the
" Observation of the Laws, should be the most
" dangerous Impostors in the World; and that
" under the Cloak of such fine Doctrine, they
" should conceal that horrible Tenet of compel-
" ling even Sovereigns to embrace their Opinion,
" or to deprive them of their Throne?

" You can't imagine, *continued the* Japoneſe,
" how happy we are now, that we have no do-
" mestic Disturbances to fear, no Apprehension
" that a Commerce with Foreigners will corrupt us,
" and plunge us again in those Misfortunes, which
" the Nation has so long suffered. We have re-
" formed the old Abuses, first introduced by the
" *Portugueſe*, and augmented afterwards by all the
" *Europeans*: We endeavour to inspire our Chil-
" dren betimes with a Spirit of Industry, for the
" Improvement of the Domestic Trade of the
" Kingdom; we protect the Sciences, and excite
" those who cultivate them to perfect themselves
" therein, by Rewards and Motives of Honour;
" we hinder their deviating from the Practice of
" the Laws, by Means of a great Number of In-
" spectors that we have established in all the
" Cities, Towns and Villages, who make it their
" sole Business to maintain Order and Discipline;
" and these wise and equitable Judges so well dis-
" charge their Office, that the whole Empire is

" now

" now a School of Civility and Good Manners. " 'Tis impossible, let People take what Care they " will, but in a great Number of Men, there must " always be some that are vicious; but we punish " Guilt severely, and tho' we cannot hinder Men " from being wicked, we don't tolerate them.

" Thus have I given you an Account of the " intestine State of our Country; as to the Ex- " ternal, we have nothing to fear from our Neigh- " bours. The *Chinese*, who are those that might " attack us with the most Ease, are afraid of us, " and would be loth to undertake a War which " they know must prove fatal to them in the " End. On the other hand, as we have no View " to make any Conquest, or to aggrandise our- " selves, no body is afraid of us. We are sure " by our Wisdom and Moderation to avoid fo- " reign Wars; but happen what will, we have al- " ways a good Number of Troops ready to march " upon the first Notice. We so little fear our " Enemies, and especially the *Portuguese* and *Spa- " niards*, that in a little time after we had ba- " nished both, we did not scruple to put the grossest " Affront upon them, because they had presumed " to disobey our Orders. Perhaps, *continued the* " Japonese, you will be very glad to be acquainted " with the Story.

" The *Portuguese* regretting the Misfortune of " their being banish'd from us, and their Avarice " still suggesting the sad Remembrance of it to " them, they resolved to try all Ways to be recal- " led into the Kingdom, and finding that Force " would not avail, they had Recourse to Hu- " mility and Complaisance. They sent two " Ambassadors to the Emperor from *Macao*, " who arriving at *Nagasaki*, with a numerous " Retinue, were arrested, pursuant to the Order

" issued

" iſſued after the Baniſhment of the *Portu-*
" *gueſe*, which forbad any of them from ever
" returning to *Japan* upon any Pretence what-
" ever. When the Emperor heard of their Arrival,
" he was ſo exaſperated to think, that People
" whom he had baniſhed for conſpiring againſt
" his Life, ſhould dare return to his Dominions
" upon the ſpecious Pretence of an Embaſſy, and
" perhaps make a ſecond Attempt upon his Per-
" ſon, that he ordered the Heads not only of the
" two Ambaſſadors but of all his Retinue to be
" cut off, and only a Dozen of the baſeſt and
" vileſt of their Domeſtics were ſpared to carry
" the News to *Macao* of the Execution of the reſt
" of their Countrymen. In one ſingle Day, or
" rather at one Moment, threeſcore *Portugueſe*
" loſt their Lives; for 'tis a Cuſtom in our Coun-
" try to have a particular Executioner to every
" Criminal; ſo that at the firſt Signal that was
" given by the Director of the Execution, three-
" ſcore Heads of our treacherous Enemies fell to
" the Ground.

" After theſe *Portugueſe* were puniſhed, ſo far
" was the Emperor from being afraid of their
" Countrymen, that he ordered thoſe Twelve,
" whoſe Lives were ſpared, to tell thoſe who
" ſent them, that if the King of *Portugal*, nay, if
" the very God of the Chriſtians preſumed to ſet
" a Foot in *Japan*, he ſhould have the ſame
" Puniſhment. We have heard nothing more of
" the *Portugueſe* ſince this Reception, ſo proper
" for Perſons who have no Reſpect even for So-
" vereigns, and if they can but accompliſh their
" pernicious Deſigns, don't care how they break
" thro' the moſt venerable Rules, ſuch as are the
" Laws of that Hoſpitality which we ſo well ob-
" ſerved

" ſerved to them the firſt time they came among " us."

The Arguments, Dear *Sieou-Tcheou*, which were made uſe of by the *Japoneſe*, to excuſe the Barbarity of this Prince, did not ſeem to me to be at all convincing. I could not help repreſenting to him, notwithſtanding the Meaſures which People are oblig'd to keep in this Country, that the Law of Nations had been totally violated in the Perſons of thoſe Ambaſſadors, and that one Crime could never be a Sanction for a greater. Such is the Hatred conceived here againſt the *Portugueſe*, that I could not make the *Japoneſe* acknowledge, that the Emperor was in the wrong. If I durſt have ſpoke my Mind more freely, I would have told him, without mincing the Matter, that the barbarous Action they had committed, was enough to render them as odious to all the Nations in the World, as the *Portugueſe* were to them; but I was obliged to ſmother the Ideas that aroſe in my Mind concerning ſuch exceſſive Cruelty; a Cruelty which really demonſtrates how fierce and barbarous 'tis poſſible even for the politeſt People to be, when they are blinded with Hatred Thou would'ſt not believe how cruel the *Japoneſe* are: To the Inſtance which I have been giving thee I will add a ſecond, which is altogether as cruel.

Some time after the *Portugueſe* quitted *Japan*, a three deck'd Ship, fitted out by the *Spaniards* for the *Philippine-Iſlands*, being drove by a Storm, caſt Anchor in the Harbour of *Nagaſaki*, and was by bad Weather and croſs Winds detain'd there. The Governor of that Town having inform'd the Emperor of the Ship's Arrival there, his Majeſty ſent him an expreſs Order to burn her, with all that were on board. Accordingly the Governor inveſted

inveſted the Ship, which by reaſon of a contrary Wind, could not open her Way between the Boats full of Soldiers, that encompaſs'd her. The *Spaniards* being reduc'd to this Extremity, reſolving to ſell their Lives dearly to their Enemies, defended themſelves with great Valour, and hindered the *Japoneſe* a long time from boarding their Veſſel. But, in fine, the Governor, to ſet an Example to his Soldiers, threw himſelf on board, which obliged them to follow him, and notwithſtanding the Reſiſtance of the *Spaniards*, the *Japoneſe* made themſelves Maſters of the firſt Deck, but they did not long ſtay there; for the *Spaniards* getting under it blew it up into the Air, with all that were upon it, by Means of ſome Barrels of Powder to which they ſet Fire. The Loſs of theſe Soldiers did not diſhearten the Governor, who by good Luck for him was got back to his Boat ſome Minutes before the Mine was ſprung. He again attack'd the *Spaniards*, who had Recourſe to the ſame Expedient, by going under the ſecond Deck and blowing up all the *Japoneſe*. A third Attack ſucceeded the two firſt, when the *Spaniards* went down into the Ship's Hold, and blew up the *Japoneſe* a third time. Being then in the Ship's Hold, they had nothing more to do but to defend themſelves valiantly, which they did and would not yield; but at length they all periſh'd, and made the *Japoneſe* purchaſe their Death by the Loſs of 3000 of their Soldiers.

When one conſiders, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, the fatal Effects which Hatred produces amongſt Men, one cannot help ſighing at the Remembrance of thoſe ancient Days, when 'tis ſaid the happy Race of Mankind liv'd in a profound Peace and a general Union. But, Dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, were there ever ſuch Times! Is it not an agreeable Chimæra?

mæra? Was it poſſible for the Anceſtors of thoſe Men that we now ſee ſo Wicked, to be really Good? The Chriſtians ſay, that they find in their Sacred Books, that as ſoon as the firſt Man had Children, Hatred and Murder took place, without ſtaying to the third Generation. The Chriſtians perhaps make the firſt Men too bad; but I fancy we make them too good.

Fare thee well.

LETTER XXI.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

DEAR *Yn-Che-Chan*, the *French*, as thou knoweſt, are allow'd but one lawful Wife at a time; and that not only their Religion, but their Civil Law, forbids them the Uſe of Concubines. One would be apt to imagine at firſt, that there is no Country in the World where the Prerogatives of Love and Marriage are ſo cramp'd and confin'd as in this, and yet there is not one where they are more extended. The *Chineſe* have leſs Freedom, fewer Privileges, and fewer Conveniencies, notwithſtanding the Concubines, or ſecond Wives, which they are allowed by the Laws.

The

The *French*, as I have told thee, Dear *In-Che-Chan*, have several Rules injoin'd by the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Judges, which are never put in Execution, and only made to adorn their Law-Books, which may be compared to the ancient Works of the *Sibyls*, that the *Roman* Prieſts kept in their Temples; to which they paid very great Reſpect, but never read, nor ſo much as underſtood them. The Law therefore by which they are allowed but one lawful Wife at a time, is only obſerved by thoſe, who, for want of Subſtance, can't afford to break it, or by ſome Perſons, who are contented with one Wife; for the reſt of the *French*, ſo far from having a Regard to it, break it publickly. One hears it ſaid every Day, ſuch a Duke keeps two very pretty Girls, beſides a Dancer at the Opera; ſuch a Magiſtrate gives 2000 Crowns a Year to a young *Languedocian*, whom he keeps in Lodgings near his own Habitation; and this little Sempſtreſs has private Dealings with a Merchant. In ſhort, in all States the Uſe of Concubines is equally eſtabliſhed.

The Thing in which I think the *French* more happy than the *Chineſe* is, that becauſe a Man is allow'd but one Wife at a time, they don't keep their Miſtreſſes at their own Houſes, and only ſee them at certain Moments which are devoted to Pleaſure; conſequently they have leſs of the Incumbrances which attend a numerous Family, conſiſting of ſeveral Women living together.

If the *French* were contented with their Miſtreſſes, they would do no more than artfully correct a Law, which they fancy to be contrary to their Repoſe; but what I can't bear in them is, the Inclination they have to Adultery; a Vice which only paſſes for a Gallantry at *Paris*, and all over the Kingdom, among the Men of Faſhion.

An

An Adulterer is here called a *successful Lover*; and the Title of *Amiable*, is bestowed upon the Person who deserves that of *Abominable*. No doubt thou wilt ask me, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, why the *French*, after having provided against the Inconveniencies of having but one Wife, and after indulging themselves in the Liberty of taking as many Concubines as they have a Mind to, should offer so grosly to affront their Countrymen, and without blushing, defile the Beds of their Friends, and even of their Relations? I must tell thee, that there are two Reasons which are the Cause of this strange Behaviour. The first is the Self-conceitedness of the *French*, who fancy they are form'd by Nature to be lov'd as soon as they make their Appearance, and reckon the Hearts they win as so many Exploits. A Man, who has debauch'd fifteen or twenty Women in this Country, is as much admir'd by the Beaus, as the Marshal *de Villars* is by those who read his History, or by the Officers who served under his Command. After this, 'tis not surprising that Men of excessive Vanity, and who are able to gratify it by satisfying their Passions, should intirely abandon themselves to it; nay, they even find it a very easy Matter to do it. The Women here don't think it the least Scandal for any other Man besides their Husband to visit them, to chat with them, and even to make Love to them. They who are the chastest love to hear it, but there they stop; whereas the others are not satisfy'd barely with the Gratification of the good Opinion they have of themselves, by the Homage paid to their Beauty, but they go farther, and take their full Swing of the Liberty which they enjoy.

The Character of a Coquette at *Paris*, is no more odious than that of the successful Gallant; a wanton

wanton Wife has nothing to fear from the Public. Moreover, there are so many of 'em, that if it was the Fashion in *France* to despise a wanton Wife, there would be whole Streets in *Paris*, wherein all Manner of Correspondence with the Fair-Sex must necessarily be quite broke off. 'Tis true indeed, that if the *French* Women are false to their Husbands Beds, they do as absolutely dispense them from the Vow which they have made to them, and easily part with all the Prerogatives which they derive from the Denomination of the one only Wife. They are seldom seen to claim them, or to complain of the Breach of a Promise founded upon the Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws: on the contrary, they very often give way to their Husbands new Amours. They furnish them with Opportunities of seeing their Mistresses, say and do a thousand complaisant Things to them; carry them into the Country, to the Walks, the Play-houses; and in short, make them their dearest Friends. It may be taken for granted in the general, that in *France* the Friend of the Husband, is commonly the Gallant of the Wife; and the Companion of the Wife, the Husband's Mistress: Thus the Pretext for the most venerable of the Virtues, serves to authorise the greatest of Crimes.

The second Reason, Dear *Tn-Che-Chau*, why the Use of Mistresses is no Hinderance to the Crime of Adultery, is, that commonly the Keeping of Mistresses is very expensive; whereas the Women that are debauch'd, generally abandon themselves from Motives of Love, in which Interest has no Share. Avarice, the Impossibility of finding Money, the Difficulty of furnishing the Expences of another Family, all this together is the Inducement very often for a married Man to choose rather to make his Addresses to his Neighbour's

Wife, than to take a Woman to himself alone, especially if he has one already.

We have prevented the Inconvenience arising from the Want of Substance to maintain a second Wife, by establishing public Places to which a Man may go with all manner of Safety. There are some here, but really they are *cut-throat* Houses, and in nothing like those of *Pekin*; for a Man risques his Health here as much as he does his Purse.

The *French* have not had the Sense to contrive those useful Establishments to Society, which secure the Peace of Husbands, the Honour of Daughters, the Tranquillity of Families; which, in short, hinder the Commission of a Number of Crimes so frequent in Countries where Adultery, Abortion, and the Debauching of Girls of good Parentage, are but too common.

The *Romans* thought as wisely as the Eastern Nations. They established Places where the Flames of Concupiscence might be extinguished, and they retain'd the same Esteem as ever for those who had Recourse to them. One Day, when a *Roman* of Distinction came out of one of those Places, *Cato* the Wise, the Hero of the Republic, perceiving him, said to him, *Well done* *, Go on in Virtue; *that's the only Place for a young Man, who finds his Lust inflamed, to go and cool it at, rather than to debauch*

* *Quidam notus homo quum exiret fornice: Macte,*
Virtute esto, *inquit sententia dia Catonis:*
Nam simul ac venas inflavit tetra libido,
Huc juvenes æquum est descendere, *non alienas*
Permolere uxores. . . . *Nolim laudarier, inquit,*
Sic me mirator cunni Cupiennius albi.
Hor. Sat. Lib. I. Sat. ii. *v.* 31, &c.

Mr.

debauch other Men's Wives. To the Precepts of the *Roman* Censor, I add, that 'tis also necessary he should save the Honour of Families, and not debauch Virgins; for all Crimes that are hurtful to Society, cannot be enough prohibited.

The *French* thought formerly upon this Subject as the *Romans* did. There were such Establishments in several Towns of the Kingdom, but they were aboliſh'd, and those they have now are but meerly tolerated. The Reason they give for it is, that such Institutions are contrary to the Religion which they profess, and that they could not authorise them by the Laws, without acting against their Consciences, and rendering themselves Criminal in the Sight of God. I commend this Delicacy, Dear *In-Che-Chan*; People are always extremely blameable to do a thing which their Conscience tells them is bad; but I wish their Conduct was more uniform. Their Ancestors were of the same Religion; how came it they had not the same Scruple? Are they more clear-sighted now than they were then? I will admit they are; but why then do their Magistrates, whose Province it is to suppress those Places which they call *Infamous*, tolerate them? Are their Consciences less delicate than theirs were, or are they more knowing? Besides all the *French* profess the same Religion, which, as it forbids the Sovereign to make such

Mr. CREECH's Translation.

A certain famous Bully of the Town,
When he did leave the Stews, was often known,
To use old *Cato*'s Words, *Go bravely on*:
Here our hot Youths shou'd come to cool their Flame,
And never use the marry'd City-Dame:
But *Cupien* says, I'll not be prais'd for this,
That *Cupien*, who admires a Matron Miss.

Eſtabliſhments, likewiſe forbids the Subjects to uſe them. From whence comes it then, that thoſe which are but merely tolerated, are nevertheleſs full of People, notwithſtanding the Danger of being in ſuch Places? To ſpeak the Truth, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, People are Chriſtians here externally and in Theory, but very little in Heart and Practice.

Since I am upon this Subject, thou wilt not be ſorry for my ſending thee the Copy of certain Regulations made by a Sovereign Princeſs of the Kingdom of *Naples*, and of the County of *Provence*. They were made for an Eſtabliſhment at *Avignon*, like to thoſe we have in *Pekin*. They are as follow in the Author * from whence I take them.

" In the Year 1347, on the Eighth of *Auguſt*, " our Good Queen *Joan* permitted a Brothel-" Houſe to be erected at *Avignon*. She forbids " all debauch'd Women to live in the City, and " requires they ſhould be all ſhut up in the ſame " Place, and that for their being known, they wear " a red Lace with Tags upon their left Shoulder.

" If any young Woman, after having once proſtituted herſelf, has a Mind to give herſelf to " the Public, the Head Beadle ſhall take her by " the Arm and lead her into the Town, with Beat " of Drum, and her red Shoulder-Knot, and ſhall " carry her to the ſaid Brothel-Houſe, where ſhe " ſhall be lodg'd with others of her Stamp. Our " Good Queen orders, that the ſaid public Stews " be ſituate in the Street of *Pont Traucat* near " the *Auguſtin*'s Convent as far as the Gate-Peire,

* New Treatiſe of Venereal Maladies, by M. *de la Metiere*, M. D. *pag.* 49. The *Paris* Edition.

" and

" and that there be on that Side a Door for every " body to open within, but not without, for fear " leſt ſome young Man ſhould ſee the Girls " of that Place without the Permiſſion of the " Governeſs, who ſhall be choſe every Year by " the Conſuls of the City. She ſhall keep the " Key of the Door, and caution the young Fel- " lows to make no Diſturbance, nor to frighten " the Girls, on pain of being immediately car- " ried to Priſon upon the leaſt Complaint.

" The Queen requires, that every *Saturday* the " Governeſs, accompanied with a Surgeon ap- " pointed by the Conſuls, ſearch all the Girls that " are committed to her Charge; and if any one " has contracted any Malady by her Occupation, " ſhe ſhall ſeparate her from the others for fear " leſt the young Fellows ſhould have to do with " her and be infected.

" *Item.* If any of the young Women prove with " Child, the Governeſs ſhall take great Care to " preſerve the Fruit of her Womb, and give the " Conſuls Notice to provide for the Infant's " Maintenance.

" *Item.* The ſaid Governeſs ſhall not permit any " one whatſoever to enter that Place on the *Fri-* " *day* and *Saturday* of the Holy Week, or on " *Eaſter*-Day, on pain of being degraded and " whipp'd.

" The Queen orders, That the young Women " of the ſaid Place have no Diſpute nor Jealouſy " of one another; that they cheat not one another, " nor fight, but that they live together like Siſters. " If they have any Quarrel, the Governeſs ſhall " judge of the Difference, and they ſhall agree " to her Deciſion.

" *Item.* If any one happens to rob or ſteal from " another, the Governeſs ſhall cauſe Reſtitution to

" be honestly made of what is stolen; and if the " Offender refuse to make such Restitution, she " shall be for the first time whipp'd in a Room " privately by a Beadle, and next time she shall " be whipp'd at all the Cross-Streets of the Town " by the Hangman.

" *Item.* The Governess is forbid to let any " *Jew* enter the said Place; and if any such hap- " pen to get in by Stealth, and to have an Affair " with any of the Girls, he shall be imprison'd, " and publickly whipp'd."

Observe, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that all the necessary Precautions for rendering useful an Establishment, like to that made by this Queen, are in the Statutes. We therein see that the Princess's chief View was to guard the Honour of Families. She artfully prevents all the Inconveniencies which might arise from her Expedient; for the weekly Searches secure the Health of the Public, and the exact Police observed in this Place, prevents all Surprize, and is a Security against the sad Catastrophes which daily happen at *Paris*, in Places that not only produce all the Inconveniencies which are pretended to have been the Cause of the Suppression of those Establishments, authorised by the ancient Laws, but have other Inconveniencies much more terrible: For as they are scarce frequented by any but young Rakes, or Sharpers, they are of no Use to the preventing Adultery, but the Cause of several Murders, and a great Number of Robberies. I could wish, for the Happiness of the *French*, that instead of aiming to be wiser than their Forefathers, they would study to improve by the Instructions which they have received from them. *Farewel.*

LETTER XXII.

From CHOANG *at* Ispahan *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

DEAR *Yn-Che-Chan*, tho' I have not wrote to thee for some time, don't impute it to Idleness, but to Business, which has been the real Obstacle.

I still employ my spare Moments to learn the Manners and Customs of the *Persians*; and for this Knowledge I don't consult the Natives only, but such Foreigners as are settled at *Ispahan*, who are not quite such Bigots in favour of the *Persian* Customs and Laws: For Prepossessions, a Fondness for the Country where they were born, an Inclination to what they have seen the Practice from Children, all these things are so many false Glasses thro' which the Inhabitants of all Countries look upon their own Customs.

I often have the very instructive Conversation of a *French* Merchant, a Man of Wit and Worth. He read a Letter to me t'other Day, which he was sending to a Correspondent of his at *Paris* concerning the common Women of *Persia*, whom he compares to the Courtezans of *France*. I thought the Letter so well worthy thy Perusal, that I desir'd him to permit me to send thee a Copy of it, which take as follows.

LETTER *from a* French *Merchant to his Correspondent.*

SIR,

" SINCE you desire a particular Account " from me of the *Persian* Courtezans, I shall " now do my best to gratify your Curiosity. I must " first tell you, that, like those of *France*, they " may be divided into two different Classes. Some " live at home, and have Houses of their own, " as do most of the Kept-Misses at *Paris*: Others " live and lodge by themselves in Caravanserays, " which are very much like certain Houses, and, " I might say, Streets in *Paris*, where few People " of Reputation care to dwell.

" The Number of Courtezans at *Ispahan*, at " least of those who are register'd, is not greater " than those at *Paris*, they being but about 14000. " Nay, I should think, that in *Paris* there are " more common Women, reckoning the Girls " that are in the Pay of one Man only.

" One thing in which the *Persian* Courtezans " differ from the *French* is, that their Names are " written in the public Registers, and they pay a " certain Tribute to the Government. Some " Years, when their Number has been considerable, " this amounts to 200,000 Crowns. Tho' the " *French* Courtezans are not privileged by the Laws, " yet they pay Taxes. That which comes to the " Sovereign at *Ispahan*, goes to the Ward-Offi- " cers at *Paris*, who are never at a loss for Ways " and Means to put Money in their Pockets; " and tho' one would think the Magistrates should " look upon such a Revenue as infamous, yet " those Officers say of the secret Tribute which " they impose, what an Emperor said of the Tax

" which

" which he laid upon Urine, *Lucri dulcis Odor ex re qualibet.*

" The Price of the public Women in *Persia* is " generally much dearer than it is in *France*. At " *Paris* a common Whore may be had at any " time almost for a Lewidore; but at *Ispahan*, " for the first Years of her Calling, she is never to " be had under twenty Pistoles. This shews that " the *Persians* are infinitely more addicted to " the Enjoyment of Women than the *French*; " because tho' they may have a good Number of " 'em in their Seraglio which cost 'em nothing, " they give a considerable Sum for the Enjoyment " of a Courtezan. 'Tis true, that the Women of " this Class are more amiable and more tempting " in *Persia* than the others; but then they often " ruin Persons that are very wealthy, and of " a distinguished Rank; and 'tis even said here, " that they impoverish all the young Noblemen " that follow the Court.

" The most dangerous of these inchanting *Syrens*, are the Dancers and Singers that are retained at the Opera's. It seems to be a fatal Necessity for every thing that has any Relation to the Opera, to be equally corrupted every where. The *Persians*, 'tis true, are not for overrating Things; and tho' they are prodigiously fond of the Musicians and Dancers, who divert them with their Tunes and their Balls, yet they have not, like the *French*, ennobled their Profession and passed an Arret *, by which a Nobleman

* *Lewis* XIV. was so delighted with the Opera of *Isis*, that he caused an Arret to be pass'd in Council, which gave Leave for a Man of Quality to sing at the Opera, and even to receive Wages for it without Derogation from his Quality. This Arret was re-

" man may, without Disparagement, be an Actor " at an Opera. On the contrary, they look upon " Dancing as an infamous Art, especially with Re- " gard to the Women; and all the Dancers in " *Persia* are common Whores. The Actresses at " the Opera in *France*, are not a whit better; " only there's this Difference betwixt them and " the *Persian* Madams, *viz.* That with the one " the Occupation of the Courtezan is ennobled by " Dancing and Singing; and with the others their " Profession and their Condition are on a Par. " Tho' you are a *Frenchman*, I leave you to be " the Judge between our Countrymen and the " *Persians*; for I know you think too justly to " censure the latter for the Contempt which they " have for the Occupation of those Women.

" Perhaps you will be curious to know some- " thing of the Customs of the Companies that " perform the *Persian* Opera's. Of these there " are several, each of which consists generally of " fifteen Persons; but the King's Company is not " less than twenty-four. Don't imagine, that the " Actresses are more chaste here, than they are " elsewhere; for, on the contrary, they are the most " debauch'd Women in the Kingdom, and in this " Respect perfectly like those of *Paris*. They have " no Director like our *French* ones; but they are " under Command of a Governess, who is com- " monly one of the eldest of the Company. She " takes care to conduct them whither they are " sent for, to make them rehearse all their Parts, and " to hinder them from quarrelling. She has the " Prerogative, when they are disobedient, to or-

gister'd in the Parliament of *Paris*, and even still subsists in full Force and Tenor, if I may use the Law-phrase.

der

" der them to be punished. She may actually " cause some to be whipp'd for certain Faults; " and if they relapse, she may turn them out of " the Company. But if she was to abuse her " Power, which she does not, she would be de- " graded from her Office.

" 'Twould be dangerous in *France*, to trust some " of our old Actresses with such an Employment, " because scarce a Day would pass but all the " Singing and Dancing Ladies would be flogg'd. " Do but fancy for once, how sad would be the " Fate of the Blind Cheeks of *la Pelissier* and *Her-* " *mance*, under the Discipline of old *Antier*, the " brawny Governess of the Nymphs of the *Pa-* " *lais-Royal*. The antiquated Actress takes Revenge " on their wretched B--cks for the Mortification it is " to her to live to be too old for the Applause of " the Public. After having soundly lash'd them she " turns them out of the Company.

" Such is the Temper and Disposition of the " *French* Women, that they are not to be trusted " with the Management of their Companies, when " they have the same Interests, and especially " when they strive to please alike. In *Persia*, there " is no such thing to to be fear'd from the Vanity " of the Governesses: for when they are arriv'd " at such an Age, they are persuaded they can no " longer charm; so that it may be said of the " *Persian*, that they are perhaps the only Women " in the World who are sensible of their growing " old. How different are they in this Respect " from the *French* Women, who as soon as they " are turn'd of thirty, the first thing they forget " is their Age; and when they come to be forty, " they have quite lost all Remembrance of it.

" The Pay of the *Persian* Actresses is very near " the same as that of the *French*. Those of the

" King's Company have 1800 Livres a Year, and " are allowed the Neceſſaries for their Habits; " but theſe Profits are at *Iſpahan*, as well as at " *Paris*, the leaſt Perquiſites of the Art of Danc- " ing and Singing. For the Preſents they have " from their Sparks, and the chief Nobility at " Court in one Day, are commonly much greater " than their fixed Yearly Salary.

" It were to be wiſh'd, that one thing was ob- " ſerv'd at *Paris*, for the Advantage of the Pub- " lic, and eſpecially for the Sake of the *Engliſh* " and *Dutch*, who when they come there, often " pay extravagantly for that Dancer, whom they " would have had much cheaper, if they had " known the Price for which they commonly be- " ſtow their Favours; and that is, that the Opera " Girls were called, as they are at *Iſpahan*, by " ſome Name that ſhould ſignify the exact Price " which they run at. In *Perſia*, they don't go " by the Names of *Zaira*, *Zatida*, *Fatima*, but " *Ten Tomans* *, *Five Tomans*, and *Two Tomans*. " So inſtead of ſaying *Peliſſier*, *Camargo*, *Petit* " *Pas*, and *Gaumini*, they ſhould be called by the " Names of a *Hundred Lewidors*, *Fifty Lewi-* " *dors*, *Ten Lewidors*, and *Two Lewidors*; for I " could alſo wiſh, that for the Honour of the Com- " pany the *French* Women were forbid to proſ- " ſtitute themſelves for leſs than two Lewidors, " as the *Perſian* Women are to ſell their Favours " under two Tomans. If it be known that they " have let themſelves out at an Under-rate, the " Governeſs cauſes them to be laſh'd, after which " they are turned out, and never admitted into the " Society more. When they are no longer worth

* A *Toman* amounts to fifteen Crowns *French* Money.

Two

" Two Tomans, and they are oblig'd either to break " the Rules, or to live chaſtly, they are diſmiſs'd " with ſome ſmall Gratuity, and another Woman " is taken into her Place, either from the Com- " panies in the Country, or thoſe in the Capital.

" Tho' all the *Perſian* Actreſſes are under the " Command of one Governeſs, yet they don't " live together, for they have their particular " Houſes. That in which the Governeſs lives, is " only the Place of Rendezvous, and may be com- " pared to the Wardrobe of the Opera. When any " Women are wanted only for Dancing and Sing- " ing, they apply to the Governeſs, who ſends " the Number that is requir'd, or elſe carries 'em " along with her; but when a Woman is wanted " for private Uſe, her ſtated Price is firſt ſent to " her. If it be one of Ten Tomans that is requir'd, " the Ten Tomans muſt be firſt paid down. This " Cuſtom has been eſtabliſhed by the Actreſſes, " that they may never be defeated of their Salary; " ſo that when they go abroad they have already " receiv'd their Pay.

" Some time ago a Nobleman deſir'd a Dancer, " that belong'd only to a Company in the Coun- " try to come to him, and ſent her five Crowns. " The Fair-One was very much ſcandaliz'd at ſuch " an Offer; *Go*, ſaid ſhe to the Servant, *and tell* " *your Maſter, that I never let myſelf out under* " *thirty Crowns.* The Nobleman ſent fifteen, but " it would not do; and the third time he offer'd " her twenty, but was never the nearer. At length " being made but the more eager by the Dancer's " Refuſal, he ſent the thirty Crowns, which when " ſhe had receiv'd ſhe came. The Nobleman " told her, that all he wanted of her was to ſee " her dance; he kept her a long time in Exerciſe,

and

" and afterwards carrying her into a Closer, he and " some of his Friends, made themselves merry with " her all Night long, but gave her nothing to eat " or to drink. At last, when Day appear'd, and " she thought of returning home, he led her into " his Servants Apartment, and said to her, *My* " *fair Queen, I am but a poor petty Governor that* " *can't afford to give thirty Crowns for one Night's* " *Pleasure: My Servants are to pay their Shot,* " *and 'tis but just they should have a Share of the* " *Sport.* The proud Minx was then deliver'd over " to the Secular Arm, and after every One's Turn " was served, she had the Liberty to go home. " She complain'd sadly of this Treatment; her Com- " pany also resented the Affront, and it even reach'd " the Ears of the Sovereign. The Governor had " a happy Escape, by telling the Story to the King " after so merry and comic a Manner, that he " got off by giving the Dancer ten Pistoles more. " Nevertheless he ran a very great Risque; for " such a Violence as he had committed upon this " Creature, was enough to have ruin'd him for " ever. I make no doubt, but even at *Paris*, " a Man who should behave in this Manner would " be severely punish'd. 'Tis a Crime to force any " Woman, even the most common Prostitute, " against her Will. Of this I saw a very sad In- " stance, when I was in *France*; where the Son " of a rich Merchant was condemn'd to be hang'd " in Effigy, for having committed Force upon a " Wench, tho' it was in a Bawdy-House. Thus, " Sir, have I given you all the Light I can, as to " what you desire. I am, Yours, *&c.*"

I doubt not, Dear *Tu-Che-Chan*, but this Letter has diverted thee. In my next, I shall give thee a Taste of the *Persian* Drama. Tho' the *Europeans* have

have a thorough Contempt of the *Chineſe*, yet I think the latter far ſuperior to the *Perſians*. Thou wilt ſoon be able to judge of their true Value.

Farewel; and when thou do'ſt write to SIOEU-TCHEOU, *make my Compliments to him.*

LETTER XXIII.

From CHOANG *at* Iſpahan *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

SOME amorous Intrigue or other is always the Subject of the Pieces that are performed on the *Perſian* Theatre; the Love of the Fair-Sex being a Paſſion which captivates the Inhabitants of theſe Countries more than all the Views of Grandeur, Ambition, and Glory. In theſe Comedies, we meet no ſalutary Inſtructions, no Precepts to abandon Vice; but Love is the only Paſſion that reigns in them from firſt to laſt. Our Plays ſeem to me, to be far ſuperior to theirs, becauſe the *Utile* is always join'd with the *Dulci*, and Virtue always rewarded in them, and Vice puniſh'd.

To make the juſter Compariſon betwixt our Comedies and thoſe of the *Perſians*, 'tis neceſſary that I ſhould give thee a clear Idea of the Manner of treating and executing the Love-Stories, which are always the Plan of them. The youngeſt Actreſſes generally appear in the firſt Scene. The De-

Description they give of Love is often more lascivious than modest; they paint the Allurements, the Charms, the Pleasures, the Softness, and the Transports of this Passion. Sometimes too, they make mention of its Fury, Fears, and Jealousies; but 'tis according to the Piece they are to play; for these first Scenes are a Kind of Prologues detach'd from the Body of the Comedy, which have no manner of Intrigue, and are only form'd to dispose the Minds of the Audience, and to inspire them with a Taste for the principal Subject. Sometimes in these Prologues, the Women represent pretty Boys that are winning and inticing, but in a manner that is commonly shocking to Modesty.

After these Scenes, comes on the Intrigue of the Play. The Company, which then is divided into two Choruses, celebrate with tender Airs and extravagant Dances, the Victories which a Lover gains over the Heart of his Mistress: Upon other Occasions, the Choruses lament the Repulses which a second Lover meets with. In short, 'tis according to the Subjects of the principal Scenes, which are all rehearsed without Singing, that the Choruses regulate their Songs and Dances. Sometimes the Play concludes with Speeches, or Representations, so nasty and scandalous, that the most wanton Eyes, and the most debauch'd Ears, can scarce bear the Impudence of 'em. 'Tis true, that all Comedies don't end in so obscene a Manner; but the number of those which do is much more considerble than of those that have a little Regard to Decency.

The *Persians* are not scandaliz'd by these shameful Representations, and no Wonder, since Continence passes with them not only for a Defect but a Crime. What Modesty is to be expected from a People

People, whose Religion authorises and even commands Luxury and Lechery?

Comedies are natural and genuine Pictures of the People among whom they are acted. I have heard the *English* say, that their Theatrical Performances are full of great Sentiments, but that a savage Cruelty has too great a Share in them. Thou knowest, that the *French* Tragedies which thou hast read, paint the *French* to Perfection; one there sees their tender, passionate, and soft Disposition, and their Self-conceit too; there being few of their Heroes but what make their Boast when they come to speak of them.

The *Chinese*, who are prodigiously fond of the Sciences and Philosophy, fill their Tragedies with Morality; but to me they seem to stick too much to one single Point, and that thinking they do enough if they inspire a Love of Virtue and a Hatred of Vice, they neglect every thing that might tend to join Profit with Pleasure. In our Comedies, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, we don't observe any of those Rules which formerly made the *Greeks* so perfect, and which for an Age past, have made the *French* as perfect as the *Greeks*. I own to thee that I could heartily wish, that tho' we don't care to subject ourselves to the Rules which the *Europeans* call the *Three Unities*, we should at least preserve a little more of the Probable in our Plays. We sometimes have a Child born in the Midst of a Comedy, and at the End of it he is above thirty Years old. For Example, in the Tragedy intituled, *The Little Orphan of the Family of* Tchao *, this Orphan, all in one Hour's time, comes into the World, is carried to a very remote

* *Pere du Halde* has given an intire Translation of it.

Place,

Place, and there educated, returns from thence to *Pekin* at twenty-five Years of Age, tells the Emperor how unjuſtly his Prime Miniſter *Tou-ngan-cou*, put his Father to Death; and the Emperor, convinc'd by the Reaſons of the Orphan, reſtores him to all the Rights of which his Father had been depriv'd of, and puts his Miniſter to Death.

So many Circumſtances, which muſt needs have happened at Times very diſtant from one another being huddled together without Care, are ſhocking to all the Rules of Probability, and by conſequence deprive the Spectators of a Part of the Pleaſure which they would have, if Incidents were brought to their View, which were better manag'd and conducted with more Art. The Poet ſhould have made ſome of his Actors rehearſe the firſt Misfortunes of his Orphan, and they ſhould not have done it till the Moment that he arriv'd at *Pekin*; then the meer Diſcovery of the Crime of *Tou-ngan-cou* would have made the principal Subject of the Piece.

Our Poets deprive themſelves of a great Advantage, by rejecting almoſt all Narratives as languiſhing, and putting the moſt ſimple and moſt cruel Things equally into Dialogue and Action. In my Opinion, the *Europeans* are much wiſer by putting into a Narrative thoſe Facts and Circumſtances, which, through their Simplicity, become tedious in the Dialogue, and by never expoſing thoſe Objects to View, which are enough to ſhock it. In the very Play of the *Orphan*, &c. juſt mention'd, the Princeſs his Mother ſtrangles herſelf on the Stage; an Action ſo horrible that the Spectators ought by no means to ſee it. Not but that the Circumſtance of this Princeſs's Death is affecting, yet it would have been equally the ſame, by treating it in another Manner. She dyes, becauſe ſhe

ſees

sees that the Physician, who promises to save her Son, is afraid that she will one Day or other reveal the Secret, and by such Indiscretion ruin him. Being alarm'd with the Physician's Doubt, and apprehending that, instead of concealing her Son, he would deliver him to a Tyrant, she takes a generous Resolution that moment, and kills herself to bury a Secret with her, of which none but the Physician is to be the Depositary. Her Manner of speaking in her last Moments is pathetic; it discovers at the same time the Tenderness of a Mother, the Magnanimity of a Heroine, and the natural Pangs which the Approach of Death causes even in Hearts that are the most intrepid. *Go*, said she, Tching-yng, *banish all Fear---Listen to what I say---Behold my Tears---His Father dy'd by a Dagger---The Thing is determin'd---His Mother will follow him.*

Another Fault which I find in our Plays, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is, that an Actor no sooner comes upon the Stage, but he declares who, and what he is; and tho' it answers no manner of Purpose, he says, *I am such a one.* This would be tolerable for once; but there is no Actor who does not begin his Part in the same manner. What Probability is there, that *Tching-yng*, Physician to the Princess, should say as he entered her Chamber, *My Name is* Tching-yng, *I am by Profession a Physician, I served the King's Son-in-law, and he had a Kindness for me that he had not for any other?* To whom is all this Language therefore directed? Is it to himself? that's ridiculous. Is it to the Spectator? this denotes the Barrenness of the Poet's Genius, who does not know how to make an Actor known, without making him spell his Name, and without telling the Reason of introducing him into the Scene to no manner of Purpose. The

Ex-

Europeans are much better Managers than we are of this Sort of Decorum, and I can never enough commend the Precepts which have been given them upon this Subject, by one of the greateſt *French* Poets, and of the firſt whoſe Works were put into our Hands by the Miſſionaries. Theſe are his wiſe Rules *.

Que dès les premiers Vers l'action preparée
Sans peine du ſujet applaniſſe l'entrée.
Je me ris d'un Acteur, qui lent à s'exprimer,
De ce qu'il veut d'abord ne ſait pas m'informer;
Et qui, debrouillant mal une penible intrigue,
D'un Avertiſſement me fait une fatigue.
J'aimerois preſque autant qu'il declinat Son Nom,
Et dit; je ſuis Oreſte, *ou bien* Agamemnon,
Que d'aller par un tas de confuſes merueilles,
Sans rien dire a l'eſprit, etourdir les Oreilles.

Thou perceiveſt, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that this learned Author finds as much Fault with thoſe who, like certain *Europeans*, confound their Subject, as

* 'Tis thus render'd in the *Engliſh* Tranſlation of *Boileau*'s Works.

The Secret is Attention firſt to gain;
To move our Minds, and then to entertain:
That from the very opening of the Scenes,
The firſt may ſhew us what the Author means.
I'm tir'd to ſee an Actor on the Stage,
Who knows not whether he's to laugh, or rage;
Who an Intrigue unravelling in vain,
Inſtead of pleaſing, keeps my Mind in Pain:
I'd rather much the nauſeous Dunce ſhould ſay
Downright, my Name is *Hector* in the Play;
Than with a Maſs of Miracles ill-join'd,
Confound my Ears, and not inſtruct my Mind.

with

with those who, like the *Chinese*, for no manner of Reason tell their Names, and say, I am *Toungan-cou*, or else I am *Kong-lou*.

Since I am for criticising every thing that I think censurable in our Comedies, I would have Singing entirely banish'd from them, and that it should never be allow'd to the principal Actors at least, to offer to sing in the most pathetic Parts. This odd Jumble of Declamation and Singing at one and the same time, is offensive to Probability. The *Europeans* have many Pieces which they sing; but in them Declamation is intirely banish'd, as Singing is from those wherein they declaim. I don't pretend to say, that Singing does not strongly express the great Passions of the Soul, but all I contend for is, that it should not be oddly confounded with Declamation.

This Dear *Tn-Che-Chan*, is what I think of our theatrical Pieces, which appear to me to be much inferior to those of the *Europeans*. Yet they abound with curious Fragments, and there is not in any one of the *French* Poets so fine a Scene as that when the Physician is ready to deliver up his own Son to save the Life of the Orphan, and even to suffer Death himself, to prevent the Massacre of a great Number of young Children. What a generous old Man says to this Physician is altogether as great; and with this beautiful Scene permit me to conclude my Letter.

TCHING-YNG.

" Sir, since you know so well what has pass'd, " I'll say nothing of it; but I'll tell you what perhaps " you know nothing at all of; which is this: That " when the Princess was confin'd to her own Pa- " lace, she was delivered of a Son, whom she " called *The Orphan of the Family of* Tschao; " and

" and all my Fear is, leſt *Tou-ngan-cou* ſhould " come to know it, and cauſe him to be taken; " for if he once fall into his Hands, he will put " him to a cruel Death, and the Family of *Tſchao* " will be quite without an Heir.

KONG-LUN.

" Has any body ſav'd this poor little Orphan? " Where is he?

TCHING-YNG.

" Sir, you ſeem to have ſo great Compaſſion " for the whole Family, that I can hide nothing " from you. The Princeſs before ſhe died, com- " mitted her Son to me, and deſir'd me to take " care of him till he comes to Man's Eſtate, and " be able to revenge himſelf of the Enemy of his " Family. As I was coming out of the Palace " with my precious Truſt, I found *Han-Koue* at " the Gate, who let me paſs, and killed himſelf in " my Preſence. Upon this, I fled with my little " Orphan, and could think of no Place ſafer for " him than your Houſe. I know, Sir, that you " were an intimate Friend of *Tſchao-tun*, and I " make no doubt but you will take pity on his poor " Grandſon, and preſerve his Life.

KONG-LUN.

" Where have you left this dear Infant?

TCHING-YNG.

" Without, under the Banana-Trees?

KONG-LUN.

" Don't be afraid; go fetch him, and bring him to me.

TCHING-YNG.

" Sir, You don't know that *Tou-ngan-cou*, find- " ing that the Orphan has eſcaped, is going to " deſtroy all the Children who are about his " Age; and I had a Thought of concealing him

" at

" at your Houſe, by which means I ſhall acquit
" myſelf of all my Obligations to his Father and
" Mother, and ſave the Lives of all the innocent
" Babes in the Kingdom. I am in the forty-fifth
" Year of my Age, and have a Son about the
" Age of the little dear Orphan, who ſhall paſs
" for little *Tſchao*. You ſhall go to *Tou-ngan-*
" *cou*, and inform him againſt me for having con-
" cealed the Orphan that he ſeeks after. I am
" willing to dye with my Son, and you ſhall e-
" ducate the Heir of your Friend till he is in a
" Condition to revenge his Relations. What ſay
" you of this Scheme? Don't you like it?

KONG-LUN.

" How old do you ſay you are?

TCHING-YNG.

" Forty-five.

KONG-LUN.

" It will be at leaſt twenty Years before this
" Orphan will be able to revenge his Family! You
" will then be ſixty-five Years old, and I ſhall be
" fourſcore and ten. What Aſſiſtance can I give
" him at ſuch an Age? O *Tching-Yng*, ſince you
" are willing to ſacrifice your Son, bring him to
" me, and go and inform againſt me to *Tou-ngan-*
" *cou*; and let him know that I conceal in my
" Houſe the Orphan he ſearches after. Then
" *Tou-ngan-cou* will come with his Soldiers, and
" ſurround this Village. I ſhall die with your Son,
" and you will educate the Orphan *Tſchao* till
" he is able to revenge his Family. This Scheme
" is even more ſure than yours, what do you ſay
" to it?

TCHING-YNG.

" I like it alſo; but you will pay too dear
" for it. Let us rather put little *Tſchao*'s Cloaths

" upon

"upon my Son. Go, and accuſe me to the Tyrant,
"and I and my Son will dye together."

Farewel Dear YN-CHE-CHAN.

LETTER XXIV.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

I WAS yeſterday at the Opera; the Splendor of which, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, captivated my Eyes moſt agreeably. In the Repreſentations of theſe Tragedies which are formed to Muſic, the *French* have collected every thing that is moſt likely to gratify the Paſſions. The Sight is charm'd by ſtately Decorations, and by bold Machines, which ſeem to have been formed by nothing leſs than Witchcraft. The Hearing is tickled by harmonious Melody, and the Heart melted by ſinging the moſt tender and the moſt moving Verſes. To all the bewitching Charms of this Entertainment they add Dances alſo, which give new Life to what might have been too languid in the Muſic; conſequently the Spectators are at every Turn entertained by a Variety of Objects equally tempting, and which, though in a diffe-Manner, produce the ſame Effect.

I dare

I dare say, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that let a Man be ever so much a Philosopher, 'tis impossible for him to go to the Opera, and not feel such Motions as the most Stoic Virtue cannot stifle. If *Plato*'s Disciple *Xenocrates*, who formerly went to Bed with a most beautiful Harlot, whose inticing Airs, and the Use she made of her Hands, could not disturb his Repose, nor raise the least Desire in him; if this *Xenocrates* was to be at the Opera at *Paris*, and see *la Salé* dance, or hear *la Pelissier* sing, he would say the very contrary to what the Harlot said of him, and no doubt would answer such as should reproach him for suffering himself to be seduced by those dangerous Actresses, *I am not a Statue.*

Before I had been at an Opera, I thought, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that 'twas impossible to be so much charm'd with a Piece sung out intirely, as with one that is but rehearsed. What confirm'd me in my Opinion was, that I never lik'd the Practice of our Comedians, to sing and declaim in the same Scene, which I thought an odd Contrast: But when they sing all the time, 'tis quite otherwise; for the Audience then, as it were, forgets that they talk in another Strain, and it appears to them to be the Tone of the common Language. One is habituated to Singing as to Poetry; and 'tis not more surprizing to see a Man dye away in Singing, than in Rhiming. The Heart is as much seduc'd by the Harmony of Music, as by that of Verse; so that nothing besides the odd and ill-contriv'd Jumble of Singing and Declamation can hurt them, and hinder them from having that Effect which they never fail to produce when they are not weakened.

I should be very much inclin'd to think, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that Singing is more proper than

Declamation, to expreſs the great Paſſions, and to make them felt; Harmony having a Power of itſelf to move and to captivate us. Skilful Muſicians can inſpire all the Paſſions; one while they animate, by and by they ſooth 'em; ſometimes they extort Tears, and throw their Hearers into a ſweet Melancholly, and a little after they rouſe them to a certain Pitch of Fury. When the Poet joins with the Muſician, and Verſes unite their Charms with thoſe of Muſic, what ought we not then to expect from both?

The Dances which are artfully mix'd at the Opera with the Songs, don't in the leaſt diminiſh the Attention of the Spectators to the principal Subject; but on the contrary revive it in ſome meaſure, and give it new Force. As the Character of theſe Dances is always proportioned and adapted to the Paſſion that is to be inſpired, they diſpoſe the Heart to ſuffer itſelf to be touch'd therewith, and do themſelves in part captivate it. The ſoft and graceful Steps of a Saraband, danc'd by one charming Actreſs, denote the tender Airs that will be ſung the next Minute by another.

It was the Saying of one of the ancient *Romans*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that all the Arts were in a manner appendant to one another: This Sentiment may be apply'd to the Pleaſures which the Opera furniſhes. It makes them ſucceed one another, and ſometimes joins them all together. In the Choruſſes, which are commonly ſung at the End of the Acts, we ſee all the Pomp of it. It often happens, that there is a fine Dance carried on while a Piece of Muſic is ſung, compoſed in ten different Parts, to compleat the Conqueſt of the Heart: And during this ſo agreeable Entertainment, one is ſurpriz'd to ſee a Palace, form'd and erected in an Inſtant, as it were by Inchantment.

Thou

Thou wilt eaſily imagine, *Yn Che-Chan*, how great muſt be the Expence of the Machines, by means of which ſuch Prodigies are produced. As I was very much condemning the Magnificence of this Variety of Scenes and Decorations, a *Frenchman* of my Acquaintance ask'd me, if we had ſuch Spectacles at *Pekin* as their Opera? *We have not ſo much* ſaid I, *as any Room ſet apart for our Plays; but we act them in private Families that have a Mind to ſee them.* "What, *reply'd the* Frenchman, have "you no public Theatre in *China?* Pray, tell me "then, how you do when you rehearſe your Co- "medies? 'Tis ſtrange, that a People ſo ingenious "as the *Chineſe*, ſhould take ſo little Care to per- "fect the Art of embelliſhing their Entertainments, "and to augment the Pleaſure and Convenience "of 'em. If there was no ſeeing a Play at *Paris*, "without having it perform'd at home, three- "fourths of the Inhabitants would for ever be "depriv'd of that Advantage. How few People "are there rich enough to pay the Charge of it? "I believe as much, *ſaid I to the* Frenchman; "and there's ſcarce any but the Mandarins, or "very rich People at *Pekin*, that ſend for the "Comedians to their Houſes, when they make "any great Entertainment. As ſoon as the Gueſts "are ſeated at Table, four or five of the princi- "pal Comedians, very well dreſs'd, enter the Din- "ing-Room, and falling flat on their Faces, ſtrike "the Floor with their Heads four times; for we "are not ſo complaiſant to our Comedians as you "are to yours. We conſequently keep up to our "Principles, and live with 'em according to the "Opinion we have of their State and Profeſſion. "After they have ſhew'd this Mark of their Re- "ſpect, they riſe up, and the Chief of 'em addreſ- "ſing himſelf to the moſt conſiderable Man of the

" Guests, gives him a List of what Plays his Com-
" pany is ready to perform. When 'tis determined
" what it shall be, the Musicians play the Overture
" in Concert, during which a Carpet is laid
" over the Floor, and the Actors come out of
" the next Room, which serves for the same Pur-
" pose as the Dressing-Rooms behind your
" Theatres; and that is all the Preparation that is
" made for the Representation of our Comedies.
" When the Ladies have a Mind to be present,
" they place themselves in a Room adjoining to
" that where they dine, from whence they may
" see and hear, if they please, without being seen.
" When they don't choose to be concealed, they
" open the Lettices. For the same Decency
" which does not allow the Ladies to be with us
" at public Feasts, will not allow them to be
" mixed and confounded in the same Room with
" the Men, who are often heated by Wine and
" Debauchery."

" These Precautions, *reply'd the* Frenchman,
" must render your Comedies almost as insipid as
" your plain Way of representing them. The
" Pomp of an Entertainment depends partly on
" the Women, who are always the finest Orna-
" ment of it. If you observe those Days, when
" the Ladies don't adorn the Boxes, the Theatre
" languishes, and suffers for their Absence. You are
" in the right, *reply'd I*, but the *Chinese* had rather
" their Wives should be adorned with the Love
" of Virtue and Decency, than their Spectacles grac'd
" with the Presence of their Wives. The Eastern
" Nations, *reply'd the* Frenchman, ascribe all the
" Steps to which Jealousy prompts them, to the
" Care of cultivating Virtue; they make use of
" fair and specious Pretences to excuse their Folly,
" but when all is said and done, they who are ac-

quainted

" quainted with them know how far they are to
" be believed. All the fine Speeches they make
" to justify the Constraint under which they keep
" their Wives, may be compared to those which
" the Monks say to us, when they recommend
" Charity, They are not charitable themselves;
" but they live by Charity. A *Chinese* is not more
" virtuous than an *European*; but in the Practice
" of Virtue he finds his Account.

If we set aside all Prejudices, we shall find, Dear *Yu-Che-chan*, that this *Frenchman* talk'd sensibly; and we shall see that all Men, being, within a Trifle, of the same Stamp, and having their own Interest in View almost in every thing, favour the Practice of certain Virtues, more or less, according to the Advantage they reap from 'em.

That Votary who preaches up Abstinence, who incessantly cries out against Luxury, declaims against new Fashions, and talks for ever of the Frugality of the primitive Times, is more covetous than virtuous; his Passion for Parsimony being the essential Cause of his Devotion.

Mark the Man who shuns the World, contemns its Pleasures, who extols and passes his Days in Retirement, who bewails the Miseries of silly Mortals abandon'd to the Noise and Luxury of Societies; he is a proud Man, who not having wherewithal to live in Towns as splendidly as he could wish, flies from Mankind, because he can't live with 'em as he would. He is, or at least appears to be, virtuous; but his Virtue would soon be in an Eclipse, if it was in his Power to be as vicious as he pleas'd.

The Mandarin, who is continually talking of the Necessity of living generous, when a Man has wherewithal; who argues that a Man is no otherwise really great, than as he makes other Men happy; who

daily gives away a Part of his Revenue; who relieves the Needy before they ask him; this so very liberal a Mandarin would perhaps be a Miser, if his Design was not to gain the Hearts of the People to form a considerable Party in the Country, and to intrench himself in the Friendship of the Subjects, in case of the Inconstancy of his Sovereign.

Yea, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, let us examine Men thoroughly; let us consider them in all their different Situations, and we shall see that almost all their Virtues are but Patch and Paint; if we take off the Masque that covers them, we shall find they are Counterfeits. Such is in general the Misfortune of Human Nature; it was scarce ever in love with Good and Truth, for their own Sakes, of which a sordid and servile Selfishness is always the Cause. 'Tis this very Interest that has always governed the World, and which does so at this very Day; from the Prince to the Mechanic, all are subject to its Dominion, all follow its Impressions, and 'tis not without extraordinary Pains that some wise Philosophers keep themselves from its Tyranny; for can that domineering Passion which Men have to gratify their Desires, and satisfy their Self-Interest, be call'd by any other Name? Of all the Things which are master'd by the Study of Wisdom, the last is the Desire of doing nothing without a View to serve ourselves. A Man must be a Philosopher indeed, to have a View in all his Actions more to the Good of the Public and of civil Society than to himself; and yet this is what the true wise Man ought to do, and what ought to be done by such as would imitate him.

The Reflection of the *Frenchman*, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, has carried me a good Way from my former Subject,

Subject, to which let us now return. The *Parisians* derive the Use of the Opera from the *Italians*, it having been known in their Country long before it was introduced into *France*. One *Lulli*, a famous Musician, was the first Man who, by Order of *Lewis* XIV, composed an Opera, which Attempt of his took so well that it was afterwards continued, and the Use of these Pieces in Music was perpetuated.

They tell a very merry Story of this *Lulli*, which I will just relate to thee. They say, that when he was very young, and but a Page, a Princess that was walking one Day in the Gardens of *Versailles*, said, in his Hearing, to other Ladies, *Here is a bare Pedestal; 'tis pity but there was a Statue on it.* The Princess, *&c.* were no sooner got out of the Walk, but *Lulli* stripp'd himself naked from Head to Foot, and having hid his Clothes behind the Pedestal, he mounted it, and there stood in the Attitude of a Statue, waiting the Princess's Return. Accordingly she came that way again soon after, and perceiving at a Distance an Image standing on the very Place where she had wish'd for one but just before, she was not a little surprized. "Is not this "inchanted Ground, *said she*, where we are? How "comes there to be that Statue already which we "see on yonder Pedestal? She advanced nearer, "and did not perceive her Mistake till she came "almost close to it. The Lords and Ladies that "accompanied the Princess were for inflicting "severe Punishment on this human Statue; but "she pardon'd him for the Jest's sake, which, tho' "it was a Prank that one would have thought "must have been the Ruin of *Lulli*, yet it was the "first Step to that Fortune to which he afterwards "arrived. Thus does Destiny sometimes make

" uſe of the moſt extraordinary Means to do a " Man a Kindneſs.

Farewel.

LETTER XXV.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

SINCE I have been at *Paris*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I have ſeveral times been ſent for to the Tables of the Great Men. The Invitation which the *French* give one another to Dinner or Supper is much more commodious and natural than that of the *Chineſe*. At the Entertainments made by our Countrymen, every thing is ſo formal and ſtarcht that an *European* may well think it an Invitation to put him under a Reſtraint and Suffering for ſeveral Hours. At *Pekin*, Formality and Ceremony are the reigning Plagues; but at *Paris*, 'tis all Joy, Freedom and Familiarity.

A *Frenchman*, when he would have the Company of his Friend at Table, only ſays to him, *Dine with me to-day*, or ſends a Servant to deſire him to come to his Houſe; whereas a *Chineſe* makes three different Invitations, and what is more, commits them all to Writing; ſo that it looks like ſending a Man three Summons to appear, and as if they fear'd the firſt Aſſignation would not ſuffice. When a Man

a Man is invited to Dinner a Day beforehand, what Need is there to write to him next Morning that he is expected, and then to repeat the same Request a little before the Dinner-time?

The *Europeans* are in the right to condemn all these unprofitable Ceremonies; and since I have had a Taste here of their easy and natural Manner of Living, I am intirely of their Opinion. Undoubtedly Politeness is absolutely necessary in Society; but there is a wide Difference between an amiable Politeness and a fatiguing Ceremonial. A *Parisian*, who is used to the Gaiety and Liberty of the Feasts of his own Country, where all the Guests eat at the same Table, where they place themselves without Scruple and Affectation, drink when they are dry without waiting till others drink, take indifferently of every Dish of Meat they like best, who, in short, do every thing upon a Festival Day that is necessary to divert, and nothing to constrain themselves; a *Parisian*, I say, who is accustomed to these Accommodations, would curse that *Chinese* a hundred times, who, for the sake of giving him a Dinner, should tire him to Death.

Some Days ago, as I was at Supper with a very amiable Gentleman, who keeps a very good House, I was surprized to see all the Domesticks sent away in the Middle of the Repast, and Bottles order'd to be brought in Buckets. *'Tis*, says the Gentleman, *that we mayn't be under so much Constraint, that I send away my Servants; we may now be the more free in our Discourse, and may with the greater Boldness abandon ourselves to Merriment.* At these Words he fell a singing a very fine Song, which was repeated by all the Guests, and a charming Joy immediately enliven'd the Feast.

When the Master of the House had ended his Song, " Sir, *said he to me*, I shall not press you

" to drink. Do as you please yourself, in this and " every thing else; we will stay no longer at Table " than you think proper." I admired, Dear *Tu-Che-Chan*, to see the *French* Politeness so superior to the *Chinese*. We live, said I to myself, like Pedants, and the *Parisians* like good-natured People, who know how to make a true Use of Pleasures.

Next Day after this civil Entertainment, which lasted till pretty late at Night, I said to a Friend of mine how much I was charmed with the frank and easy Deportment of the *French*. *Do you live thus*, he asked me seriously, *at your Meals? And do you extend the Oriental Ceremonial to your Feasts?* " More than you can think, *said I*, we suffer more " Ceremony, when we go to dine with a Friend, " than you go through in the whole Course of " your Lives." *Pray tell me*, reply'd my Friend, *what is the Ceremony at your Meals, which is so troublesome. I shall be obliged to you for your Account of things that are of equal Amusement and Curiosity to an* European. " I will gratify you, *said* " *I*, with all my Heart. The Rooms in which the " *Chinese* make their Entertainments are commonly " adorn'd with a great Number of Flower-Pots, " Variety of Images of Porcellane, and of every " thing that can give Pleasure to the Eye. Every " one sits down at a Table by himself, so that we " seldom have two at the same Table. All these " several Tables are placed in two Ranks, front- " ing each other, so that the Guests sit over-against " one another, and may easily see and talk with " the whole Company. The Sides of the Tables " are cover'd with several Basons of Porcellane, " full of several kinds of minc'd Meat, which no " body touches; they being only for Sight, and " not for Taste.

As I was going on, my Friend fell a laughing, and said to me, with a Sneer, " You adorn your " Tables then as the Emperor *Diagabulus* some- " times did his, which were only cover'd with " Dishes full of Bits of Wood, which, by the Art " of the Painter and the Carver, resembled the " nicest Viands. I should as soon have chose to " have been invited to the Table of that Emperor, " as to dine with your Countrymen, since the Pro- " hibition to eat is the same at one as it was at the " other. Your Dishes full of Food which is for- " bidden to the Guests, puts me in mind of the " Pyramids of Sweet-meats which are served up for " the Desart at the Tables of some Misers, and " which, but to touch, would make the Master of " the House put on a sower Look. He does not " mind the little Plates between; but he can't en- " dure to see the Pyramids spoil'd. If the People " whom he invites were to let him have his way, " the same Sweet-meats would be served up for ten " Years together." *Hold*, said I to my Friend, *you condemn our Customs too fast.* The Meat which adorns the Sides of our Tables is not touch'd, because it is too course, and is only placed there to fill up a Vacuum. " This being the Case, *said my* " *Friend again, with a Smile*, you either ought to " suppress them intirely, or to substitute others in " their room, of more Use. Consider it in what " Light you will, it will always follow either that Ava- " rice is the Cause of serving up Dishes that are only " for a Shew, or else 'tis the ridiculous Vanity of " displaying a great Number of Dishes, which sur- " rounds all the Sides of the Table with bad ones.

" There may be something of Truth, *said I*, in " your Arguments; but, without farther Pause, I " will pursue the Narrative of our Ceremonies. As " soon as he that makes the Feast has introduced

" the Gueſts into the Room, he ſalutes them " one after another. Then he takes a Silver or " China Cup, which he fills with Wine, lifts it up " over his Head, and then ſpills a little of it upon " the Ground, to ſignify, by this Homage, that " 'tis from Heaven he derives all he has.

" This Manner of Invitation, *ſays the* French-" man, is very ancient. We ſee ſuch Libations " in *Virgil*, and ſeveral other Poets. 'Tis true that " now all this appears ridiculous to us; but perhaps " 'tis not ſo ridiculous as the *Europeans* fancy it to " be. All People pay their Vows to the Deity " in a different Manner; and even in Nations that " profeſs the ſame Religion, there is always ſome " Difference in the external Ceremonies of their " Worſhip: I am not therefore any more ſur-" prized to ſee a *Chineſe*, before he ſits down at " Table, ſhed Wine upon the Ground, to thank " Heaven for the Benefits he has received from " it, than I am to ſee a *Pariſian* fix his Eyes upon " the Ground, and to croſs his Breaſt, Forehead, " and the Rim of his Belly; or to ſee an *Engliſhman* " bow his Head, and run his Noſe into his Hat to " ſay his Prayers. One of our beſt Poets * has ſaid " very wiſely.

C'eſt cet Etre infini qu'on ſert et qu'on ignore,
Sous des Noms differens le monde entier l'adore.

i. e.

By different Names all Mankind do adore
That Infinite Being, they cannot explore.

" I am mighty glad, *ſaid I to my Friend*, that " you have ſo favourable an Opinion of this Cuſtom " of my Countrymen; but perhaps you won't

* *Voltaire*'s Henriade, *Cant.* vii.

" like

" like this ſo well. When the Gueſts are ready " to ſit down at Table, the Maſter of the Houſe " again pours Wine into a Cup, and goes to place " it upon that Table which is for the prime Gueſt, " who endeavours to hinder him from taking that " Trouble, and ſtrives himſelf to place another " Cup full of Wine upon the Table of the Maſter " of the Houſe, upon which there enſues a Struggle " between the Parties for ſome time which ſhall be " the moſt complaiſant." *Oh! as for that*, reply'd my Friend, *you were in the right to ſay I ſhould not approve of it*; *and I could wiſh you would intirely aboliſh thoſe impertinent Civilities, which, by the Way, are not ſo polite as you may imagine*; *for while theſe two Perſons ſpend their Breath in tedious Compliments, what Part do the other Gueſts act, and what Figure do they make? For the Sake of doing Honour to one Man, you put a Contempt upon ſeveral. I admit that there are ſome People who have a Title to great Regards*; *but then the paying them ſhould not be at the Expence of others that are invited to the ſame Entertainment. Our Civility ſeems to be much better accommodated than yours*; *for all the Gueſts eat at one and the ſame Table, and are ſerved alike at one and the ſame Time.*

" I grant what you ſay, *reply'd I, to my Friend*; " but perhaps you won't ſo much diſlike the Ho- " nours that are paid to the Perſon who poſſeſſes " the chief Seat, when you know to what ſort of " Perſons the Place is generally given Except " any one be preſent who is veſted with ſome " great Dignity, 'tis always beſtow'd either upon " the oldeſt Man, or upon ſome Foreigner; and " of Foreigners, he is preferred who comes from " the fartheſt Country; conſequently an *European*, " who happens to be at any of our Feaſts, gene-

" rally

" rally has the chief Seat, except only in caſe a " Mandarin of the firſt Rank be there, when he " has the ſecond. You ſee, therefore, that the " Precedency obſerved at our Entertainments is " generally determined by the Reſpect due to old " Age, and by the Attention we are obliged to give " to all the Circumſtances of Hoſpitality. If you " were to regulate the Order of your Feaſts at " *Paris*, I queſtion whether you would have re- " gard to the ſame Decency. Our Politeneſs is " ſometimes troubleſome; but 'tis always adapted to " the Rules of Modeſty and Probity. I don't " think the ſame thing can be ſaid of yours, which " on the contrary, ſeems to me to be calculated " for a Cloke to Knavery and Falſhood.

" Without aiming to trouble you with a too " tedious Train of Particulars, I will at once in- " form you of what you ſeem curious to know. " When all the Company is ſeated, the Feaſt is " begun by drinking of pure Wine, and the " Steward, with one Knee on the Ground, ſays, " with a loud Voice, *Gentlemen, you are invited to* " *take your Cups.*

Oh! ſaid my Friend, *I don't like the Genuflection of your Steward, nor his Exhortation to take the Cup: I ſhould think it better for the Maſter of the Houſe himſelf to invite the Gueſts to drink; and I like the familiar*, Let us drink about, *of our* Pariſians, *better than all the pompous, tho' dull Ceremonial, which you have been ſpeaking of.*

" If you are diſguſted, *ſaid I*, at this firſt Cere- " mony, I foreſee that you will have no better " Reliſh for what follows. After the Steward's " Invitation, all the Gueſts take up the Cup in " both Hands, raiſe it up to their Foreheads, then " ſink it a little below the Table, after which, they " carry it ſlowly to their Lips, and drink up the

" Contents

" Contents at three or four Draughts." *What the Devil!* cry'd my Friend, *That's exactly like our Benedictions. Is it since the Missionaries have been at* China *that you have establish'd these Ceremonies? One would swear they have taught you to say Mass.* " These Customs, *I reply'd, with a Smile,* " were in use with us long before we knew the " *Europeans*; and if we may credit what half of " 'em say about the Mass, I might safely affirm, " that the Ceremonies of our Feasts must be much " more ancient than that Service. While the Guests " are drinking, some Dishes of Meat are set be- " fore them, and then the Steward invites them " to eat, as he had done before to drink. These " Dishes are relieved by others, twenty or twenty- " four times, and every time the Guests are call'd " upon to drink, tho' every one is at his Liberty to " refuse it, and the Cups they drink out of are ex- " tremely small." *By repeating them several times,* said my Friend, *the same Use might be made of 'em as we make of our Dram-Glasses, and, notwith-standing this Precaution, they would get drunk.* " So, *said I,* it happens sometimes in *China*, and " with the more Ease, because at the Desert they " change the Cups for others that are bigger, " when there are always Domesticks who take Care " to fill them out of great Bowls full of burnt " Wine." *What,* said my Friend, with a good deal of Surprize, *do you drink hot Wine at the End of your Repasts?* " Not only, *said I,* at the End, " and at the Beginning too, but always; for we " never drink Wine cold." *Oh fye!* replied my Friend, *I would sooner forgive you all your Customs than that. If they drank Ice-Wine, well and good;* but to drink it hot, parblieu, *there are none but sick People, that are fed with Toasts, who could bear such Liquor.* " There's no disputing about Tastes, *said*

" *I,*

" *I*, a *Chineſe* thinks cold Wine as bad as an *Euro-*
" *pean* does hot. In things which only depend
" upon the Senſation of the Senſes, every Man muſt
" be allowed to chooſe what is moſt agreeable
" to him; and without going to *China* to ſeek
" for Inſtances of the Variety of Taſtes, I have
" known ſome *Frenchmen* who have aſſured me,
" they could ſtarve rather than eat certain Ragous
" which the *Italians* reckon very delicious.

Farewel Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,
and let me hear from thee.

LETTER XXVI.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

I Have not forgot, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that ſome time ago I promiſed thee to ſhew thee the Conformity that there is between the Syſtem of our *Tchin*, a Philoſopher attach'd to the modern Commentators, and that of the ancient Diſciples of *Epicurus*. I will now be as good as my Word, and hope to demonſtrate clearly to thee, that the Principles of the modern Interpreters are agreeable to thoſe of the greateſt Philoſophers of ancient *Greece*. We ſhall ſee that the ſame Ideas occur on the moſt abſtracted Subjects to Men perfectly unknown to one

one another, who neither had the same Education, nor the same Religion, nor the same Country, and who by Consequence could not have the same Prejudices. Would it be wrong therefore to conclude, from the Conformity of their Ideas, that they must be true, because they seem, in some Measure, natural and innate to great Men, in what Age or Country soever they have lived?

Let us now proceed, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, to the Comparison of the Systems of *Epicurus* and *Tchin*. "Before the Heavens and the Earth * *says our* Chinese *Philosopher*, were yet form'd, there was nothing but a confused Chaos in the Midst of an immense Vacuum." Thus, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, you have the Vacuum and the Atoms of *Epicurus* and *Democritus*, the eternal Principles of all Beings. According to those *Greek* Philosophers, the Universe was form'd † of two Natures very unlike, *viz. Body* and *Space*. By *Body*, they understood the Atoms, which being eternal, could not be destroy'd by any Powers, by Reason of their Solidity. These little, eternal, and solid Corpuscles were the Cause

* Father *Halde* has translated the Treatise of this *Chinese* Philosopher. I always make use of his Translation, and often of his very Expressions.

† *Unde omnis rerum nunc consistet summa creata.*
Principio quoniam duplex natura duarum,
Dissimiles rerum longe constare reperta est
Corporum atque loci, res in quo quæque geruntur:
Esse utramque sibi per se, puramque necesse est.
Lucret. de rerum Natura, Lib. i.

Which is thus translated by Mr. CREECH.

Two Sorts of Beings Reason's Eye descry'd,
And prov'd before; their Difference vastly wide:
Body and *Void*, which never could agree
In any one essential Property.

and

and Principles of all Beings, and had subsisted from all Time, in Space, or in the immense Vacuum. Let us now hear an illustrious *Epicurean*, and we shall see that he says the very same thing as the *Chinese*. *Nature exists of itself; it consists of two things, Body, and the Vacuum* *. If we substitute the Word *Substance* in the Place of that of *Body*, a Word which signifies the same thing as the other, it will be seen that the modern *Chinese* Commentators have not only had the same Ideas as the ancient *Greeks*; but that they have explain'd them in the same Terms.

Let us proceed with the actual Examination of the two Systems. At the Time of the World's Formation, the purest, the most subtile, and the lightest Particles of the Substance rose to the Top, according to the *Chinese* Philosopher, and skipp'd and flutter'd about at first with Rapidity in the immense Vacuum. The Particles less pure, and by Consequence more heavy, precipitated themselves immediately, and united towards the Center of the Space. By this Agitation of the different Parts of Substance the Universe was form'd such as it is at this Day. The Sun and the Stars, all the Globes of Fire, were made of the lighest and most subtile Particles; and those which were not quite so subtile and light, served for the Construction of the Moon and Planets. The Earth owed its Birth to Particles more gross and coarse, and the Difference which there was between these Particles was the Cause of that between the Elements,

* *Omnis ut est igitur per se natura duabus*
Consistit rebus, nam corpora sunt, & inane.
Idem ib.

i. e. This ALL consists of BODY and of SPACE.

which

which nevertheleſs proceeding all from one and the ſame Subſtance, ſtill retain ſomething in common between them in their own Nature, how oppoſite ſoever it appear to us. Thus Air and Water, both of which ſeem to us to be naturally cold, have ſeveral Principles of Heat, tho' they are imperceptible to us. For Example; the Air which we ſuck in or ſend out without ceaſing, is rarified and dilated, when it is ſent forth, becauſe it has ſome Heat. This ſame Air, when it is attracted, and enters into our Lungs, is compacted and condenſed, becauſe 'tis naturally cold, tho' it be not intirely exempt from the Nature of Heat.

Thus, Dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, is the Syſtem of *Tchin* ſet in its true Light. I flatter myſelf thou wilt own that I have, in one Page, comprized what that Author has extended to thirty; for if he has any Fault, 'tis that of being diffuſe and prolix. Without ſtopping to criticiſe the Errors of which that *Chineſe* Philoſopher, ſo much to be eſteem'd in other Reſpects, may have been guilty, we ſhall ſee that *Lucretius*, in the Name of *Epicurus*, ſays the very ſame things. " When the Atoms * were joined " together, and when, from their Conjunction, that Maſs

* *Quippe etenim primum terrai corpora quæque,*
Propterea quod erant gravia & perplexa, coibant,
In medioque imas capiebant omnia ſedes.
Quæ quanto magis inter ſe perplexa coibant
Tam magis expreſſere ea, quæ mare, ſydera, ſolem,
Lunamque efficerent, & magni mœnia mundi.
Omnia enim magis hæc è levibus, atque rotundis
Seminibus multoque minoribus ſunt Elementis,
Quam tellus; ideo per rara foramina terræ
Partibus erumpens primus ſe ſuſtulit æther
Signifer, & multos ſecum levis abſtulit igneis.
Lucret. de rerum Nat. Lib. v.

Thus

" Mass was form'd, of which the Universe is com-
" posed, that Mass was without any Form, like to
" a confused Chaos. At length there was a Revo-
" lution in it; its Particles separated from one an-
" other to operate the Construction of particular
" Bodies, and united again afterwards, according
" to their Correspondence in Nature. The Atoms
" which produced the Earth were united in the
" Center, because they were ponderous, and link'd in
" one another. Those which made the Stars, the
" Sun, and the Moon, were more subtile, and
" more delicate; for all those cœlestial Globes owe
" their Origin to Seeds that were smoother, lighter,
" rounder and smaller than those which serv'd for
" the Construction of the Earth.

If the *Chinese* Philosopher is perfectly agreed with the *Epicurean* about the Formation of this Universe, and if he explains his System in the same Terms, he is no less correspondent with him in what relates to the Cause of Order and Harmony. He expresses himself upon the Subject thus: " The " Earth being form'd of the grossest Corpuscles of " the general Substance, the most delicate Atoms

Thus english'd by Mr. CREECH.

For first, the Earthy Parts, a heavy Mass,
And closely twin'd, possess'd the MIDDLE PLACE.
Now as these heavy Parts combin'd more close,
Descending still, they vex'd with constant Blows
The lurking Parts of SEA, of STARS and Skies,
And SUN; and squeez'd them out and made them rise;
Because those Seeds are subtile, more refin'd,
And round, and smooth, and of a lesser kind
Than those of Earth; and so can freely pass
The subtile Parts of the descending Mass.
And thus the PARTS of HEAV'N did first retire,
And bore up with them num'rous SEEDS of FIRE.

" remained

" remained ſuſpended, and ſurrounded all that lump-
" iſh Maſs, fluttering and circulating round it in-
" ceſſantly. A Hen's Egg may give us a ſlight No-
" tion of it. May not the Earth be ſaid to be like
" the Yelk of the Egg, which is ſuſpended and fix'd
" in the Middle, where 'tis immoveable? May
" not the Firmament be look'd upon as the White
" of the Egg, which embraces the Part in the
" Center, circulates round it, and continues in the
" ſame State without changing the Poſition of the
" Yelk? The Motion of the Firmament is conſe-
" quently conſtant and durable; that ſubtile and
" fluid Subſtance rolls about without ceaſing, and
" by this Motion peculiar to itſelf, cauſes the Divi-
" ſion of the Seaſons, forms the Winds, Clouds,
" Thunder and Rain.

Any Perſon whatſoever, who is not a Stranger to the Opinions of *Epicurus* and *Democritus*, would think, when he reads this Paſſage, that 'tis one of their moſt knowing Diſciples who explains their Syſtem. *Lucretius* ſays exactly the ſame thing, according to whom, " The Firmament which lends
" its Space to the Stars, was the firſt that eſcaped
" out of that ſhapeleſs Maſs which the Atoms had at
" firſt form'd; after which, its fluid and light Na-
" ture * fortified itſelf in its Circumference by the
" cloſe Union of its Parts, ſpread itſelf on all Sides,
" and

* *Sic igitur tum ſe levis, ac diffuſilis æther*
Corpore concreto circumdatus undiq; ſepſit,
Et late diffuſus in omnes undiq; partes,
Omnia ſic avido complexu cætera ſepſit.
Hunc exordia ſunt ſolis Lunæque ſecuta:
Inter utroſq; globi quorum vertuntur in auris
Quæ nec terra ſibi adſcivit nec maximus æther:
Quod nec tam fuerint gravia, ut depreſſa ſederent:
Nec levia ut poſſent per ſummas labier oras.

Et

" and contained all things in its immenſe Boſom. " The Globes of the Sun and Moon turned between " its grand Space and the Earth, being not light e- " nough to fly higher, nor heavy enough to deſcend " to the lower Parts of the Heavens.

Thus, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, are the Earth, the Sun, and the other Planetary Globes incloſed, and revolving within the Space where they are upheld, as is the Yelk of an Egg in the Shell by the Parts which environ it. The Compariſon of the *Chineſe* Philoſopher explains the Sentiment of the *Epicurean* to Perfection.

Having juſt ſeen the Reſemblance of the Syſtems in the Formation of the inanimate Bodies, let us now ſee whether there be the ſame alſo in that of the living and animated Beings. " The Production " of Mankind and other Beings, ſays *Tchin*, came " after the Univerſe was regulated, and when it " was in a State of Perfection, all that one can ima- " gine of what is lively, ſpiritual and excellent in the " Heavens and the Earth becoming united and join- " ing together in the higheſt Degree of Perfection,

Et tamen inter utroſque ita ſunt, ut corpora viva Verſent, & partes ut mundi totius extent.

Lucret. de rerum Nat. Lib. v.

i. e.

Juſt ſo the Parts of *Heav'n* did upward move,
The ſubtile *Æther* thus combin'd above:
And vaſtly wide, and ſpread o'er ev'ry Place.
Contains the reſt within her kind Embrace:
Thus *Heav'n:* Then roſe the *Moon*, and *Stars*, and *Sun*,
Which through the Sky with conſtant Motions run:
Becauſe their Seeds were all too light to lie
In Earth, not light enough to riſe on high,
And paſs the utmoſt Limits of the Sky:
But, placed between them both, the *Midſt* controul,
Certain, but moving Portions of the Whole.

" gave

" gave a wonderful Birth to those extraordinary " Men, who, in their Turn, helped to perfect Na- " ture." *Lucretius* says exactly the same thing. 'Tis the Earth warm'd and render'd fertile by the Heat of the Sun, which not only produces all Sorts of Birds, but the human Race. According to him, this Production was manifested as follows †.

" The

† ——*Terra dedit primum mortalia sæcla :*
Multus enim calor atque humor superabat in arvis.
Hinc ubi quæque loci regio opportuna dabatur,
Crescebant uteri terræ radicibus apti :
Quos ubi tempore maturo patefecerat ætas
Infantum fugiens humorem, auraſque petissens,
Convertebat ibi natura foramina terræ,
Et succum venis cogebat fundere apertis
Consimilem lactis ; sicut nunc fœmina quæque
Cum peperit, dulci repletur lacte, quod omnis
Impetus in mammas convertitur ille alimenti.
Terra cibum pueris, vestem vapor herba cubile
Prabebat multa & molli lanugine abundans,
At novitas mundi nec frigora dura ciebat,
Nec nimios æstus, nec magnis viribus auras.
Sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere
Destitit ut mulier spatio defessa vetusto.
Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas
Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,
Nec manet ulla sui similis res, omnia migrant.
i. e. Id. ibid.

——And thoughtful Man receiv'd their Birth:
For them much vital Heat in Mother Earth,
Much Moisture lay: And where fit Place was found,
There *Wombs* were form'd and fasten'd to the Ground;
In these the yet imperfect Embryos lay,
Thro' these, when grown mature, they forc'd their way,
Broke forth from Night, and saw the chearful Day:
Then *Nature* fashion'd for the Infant's Use
Small *Breasts* in Earth, and fill'd with *Milky Juice*,

such

" The first Men were born in the Bowels of the " Earth. According to the various Disposition of " Places, there were form'd in the Fields, by Heat " and Moisture, certain Matrixes, and in those Ma- " trixes were form'd Embryos, which when they " were perfected and came to Birth, they escaped " from their ancient Habitations; and the Earth, " their Mother, like a Nurse rarifying its Pores, sent " a Juice like Milk out of its Veins. Its Heat de- " fended the New-born against the Cold, its Grass " and Turf furnish'd them with Cradles; and as the " Seasons were much softer than they are now, " they were not afraid of the Injuries of the Air and " the Intemperance of the Seasons. The Earth " ceased to engender, because it became like a Wo- " man too old to bear Children. Every thing " changes through the Vicissitude of Time, and this " World itself is subject to the Laws of Dissolution."

In order to see what an intire Conformity there is between the *Chinese* and the *Greek* Systems, 'tis necessary to compare them in what they say relating to the human Soul. " Man, *says* Tchin, is a Com-

Such as in Womens Breasts she now provides
For future Infants: Thither Nature guides
The chiefest Parts of *Food*, and there they meet
Fit Ferment, there they grow both white and sweet:
Earth gave the Infants *Food*; thin Mists were spread
For *Clothes*, the grassy *Meadows* gave a Bed.
The Earth, when new, produced no raging Cold,
No Heats, no Storms; these grew as she grew old.
But weary'd now, and tir'd by Length of Time,
The Earth grows old, and weak, as Women past their prime.
Time changes all, and as with swiftest Wings
He passes forward, on he quickly brings
A different Face, a different Sight of Things.

" pound

" pound that reſults from the Union of a thing
" which is ſenſible, and from another that is in-
" viſible and not to be ſeen. As long as this Union
" ſubſiſts, the Perſon is ſuſceptible of Pain; but the
" Moment it ceaſes, he becomes inſenſible. If a
" Man be paralytic on one Side, tho' you apply Fire
" to the Part of his Body that is affected, he will
" feel no Pain. When that very Man dies, what
" is viſible in him is ſeparated from what was invi-
" ſible: This laſt Part of his Exiſtence evaporates
" into Atoms that fly up and down, and change
" into a cold Wind deſtitute of all Animal Heat.
" There remains therefore nothing of the deceaſed,
" upon which the pretended Miniſters of Hell can
" exerciſe their implacable Severity." Let us now hear *Lucretius* *; he tells us, " That Nature has
" eſtabliſh'd the Body as the Veſſel of the Soul, and
" that when it can no longer hold, and ſtop it by rea-
" ſon of ſomething that is out of Order, 'tis impoſ-
" ſible there ſhould be any Air, whoſe Power or
" Condenſation can perform what Bodies, much
" groſſer than Air, could not do. The Stories of
" *Cerberus*, † the *Furies* and *Tartarus* vomiting

* *Aere qui credas poſſe hanc cohiberier ullo?*
Corpore qui noſtro rarus magis cohibeſſit?

i. e.

—— How then can Air,
A *Body*, than our Fleſh and Blood more rare?

† *Cerberus, & Furiæ jam verò, & lucis egenus*
Tartarus, horriferos eructans faucibus æſtus,
Hæc neque ſunt uſquam, neque poſſunt eſſe profecto.
Lucret. de rer. Nat. Lib. iii.

i. e.

The *Furies*, *Cerberus*, black *Hell*, and Flames
Are Airy fancies all, mere empty Names.

" Torrents of Fire, are all Tales that have no manner of Reality; and whatever is said of Hell, is but an Allusion of the Poets to the Misfortunes which Men are liable to in this Life.

After having discharged my Promise, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I shall not here undertake the Defence of these two Systems. In some of my former Letters, I have fully told thee what my Thoughts of 'em are. 'Tis enough for me to demonstrate to thee, and that clearly, that the most knowing Men in the remotest Countries have agreed in those Opinions, which thou look'st upon as directly contrary to Reason and the Light of Nature. Alas! does this Reason equally abandon the greatest Men in all Nations? And if it were as evident as thou do'st imagine, that the Sentiments of the Modern Commentators were manifestly absurd, would the celebrated *Greeks*, the illustrious *Romans* have treated them as very rational, or very probable. Grant at least, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that nothing is really evident, and that all Men wander in the dark, because what appears absurd to great Genius's in all Countries, seems very probable to Genius's equally celebrated and equally learned in those very Countries.

Fare thee well; and let me hear from thee.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

From CHOANG *at* Ispahan *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

N. B. *'Tis proper to acquaint the Reader before-hand, that the ridiculous Stories he will find in this Letter, are really in the Books of the* Persians, *and not any Invention of mine.*

I HAVE carefully informed my self, Dear *Yn Che-Chan*, of the Religion of the *Persians*. 'Tis astonishing, that to the most excellent Things they should join the most foolish and the most ridiculous; and that they should couple the greatest and sublimest Ideas with such as are the falsest and the most contrary to Reason. This Medley of Good and Bad, of Truth and Absurdity, shews the Capriciousness and Errors of Mankind. The best Way to mortify those conceited Philosophers who are eternally talking of the Light of Nature, and always making use of the grand Terms of *Evidence*, *Demonstration*, *Certainty*, &c. is to shew them a People that are polite, civiliz'd and witty, that cultivate the Sciences, in short, such a People as the *Persians*, who yet believe the most enormous Absurdities as evident Truths; while, on the other hand those very Persians prove,

that they who condemn their Errors, fall into another Sort that are altogether as groſs.

The Idea which the *Perſians* have of the Divine Being is wiſe and juſt, and ſuch as all thoſe ought to have who don't ſuffer themſelves to be blinded either by Prejudices, or by Sophiſtry of their own forming. They admit an Eternal Being, intelligent, ſovereignly powerful, Author of the Univerſe, who governs it by his Will, and puniſheth Evil, and rewardeth Virtue. In this reſpect, they are perfectly like the learned Men of *China*, who are attach'd to the Opinions of *Confucius*, and Enemies to the concealed Atheiſm of the modern Commentators. But after having eſtabliſh'd theſe fundamental Points, they derive ſeveral others from them, which are only Fables, taken out of the Works of *Mahomet* their firſt Legiſlator, or from thoſe of his Diſciples, and the Emirs their Succeſſors.

The chief of theſe Fables is about the Prodigies that happened at the Time of the firſt Appearance of the World. The *Perſian* Doctors ſay, that the Celeſtial Intelligences, to whom the *Europeans* give the Name of Angels, were formed out of the Subſtance of Light. Long before the Creation of the Firſt Man, ſeveral of thoſe Intelligent Beings were metamorphos'd into Devils, becauſe they twice diſobey'd the Divine Being. The firſt Time they tranſgreſs'd, the Supreme Being pardon'd them, tho' their Crime was very great; for not content with having deſerted Heaven, they preſum'd to fight againſt the good Angels whom God had ſent after them to fetch them back. They were defeated, and obliged to return to Heaven, where they obtain'd Forgiveneſs for this firſt Tranſgreſſion. Nevertheleſs they diſobey'd a ſecond Time. The Supreme Being having commanded them, after he had formed the firſt Man, to fall proſtrate before

before him, those proud Intelligent Beings would do nothing like it, and undoubtedly gave it for a Reason, that they were not good for much, if they were not as good as a Man. This second Disobedience was severely punished, without Hopes of ever being pardon'd.

If we may believe the Story which is told by the gravest *Persian* Doctors, the good Angels don't love Mankind much better than the evil Ones. Tho' they made obeisance to the First Man, they acted probably as Courtiers, who embrace, flatter, and commend those whom, if it were in their power, they would ruin. Two of those Angels, whose Names were *Aruth* and *Maruth*, plotting secretly for the Destruction of the Human Race, said one Day to God, "Thy Goodness, O Lord, "is too great, thou art continually pardoning Man- "kind, and they continually grow worse. The "more Favours thou do'st shew to them, the more "Crimes they commit; thou ought'st to punish "them severely, and to make them feel all the "Weight of thy Indignation." *Ah*, reply'd the Supreme Being who knew that he had formed Men weak and subject to Error, *you don't know all the Power of Concupiscence. If you were in the Place of those whom you condemn, perhaps you would do worse Things.* The Angels, who did not believe that Passion to be so violent as the Divine Being represented it, said, "*Give us that Concupiscence, and we will see what will happen.*" What they desir'd was granted; so that immediately they assum'd mortal Bodies and came into the World, when they immediately plung'd themselves into all Kinds of Debauchery; so that as for Wine and Women, they could never get enough. Among those whom they would fain have debauch'd, there was one more crafty than the rest, who discover'd their

Birth and their Origin. *I know you perfectly well*, said she, *I know who you are, and shan't be such a Fool as to trust ye. When ye have once debauch'd me, ye will decamp early in the Morning, and fly to Heaven, and how cou'd I follow you?* This Reflection was not a bad one; and it would be well for many Women, if they had as much Foresight with respect to the Men, as she had with regard to the Angels. *Promise me*, continued she, *to take me along with you, and I will freely grant the Favour you desire.* The Angels agreed to every thing that was demanded of them; and after having taken their full Swing of Pleasure upon the Earth, they returned to Heaven, and carried Miss thither as they had promis'd. The celestial Lovers are every whit as outrageous in their Passions as the Men; but then they are more sincere and faithful. If there is such a Lover in this World, as would not keep his Word with his Mistress to carry her but thirty Leagues, what would he do if he had engaged to give her a Jaunt beyond the Moon? When the Angels were arrived at the celestial Mansion, the Divinity, very much surpris'd to see a young Woman there, sent *Gabriel* to ask her who shew'd her the Way to Paradise? She answered naturally, That she was brought thither by the Angels *Aruth* and *Maruth*. *What*, said the Supreme Being, *are not they content with the Debaucheries they have been guilty of upon Earth, would they make as bad a Place of Paradise? I will surely prevent them.* Then the Divinity cast the two Angels headlong into a deep Well near *Babylon*, where they were, and are still, hung up by the Feet, and make it their Business to teach the *Jews* Magic, and all the pernicious Secrets that are made use of by Sorcerers. A fine Conclusion this! dear *Yu-Che-Chan*. I am not sorry to see those two

snarling

ſnarling Critics that rail'd againſt us poor Men hanging by the Feet; for undoubtedly after this the Angels their Brethren, will not deſire to do us any Diſſervice with the Divinity. Have the *Bonzes* and the *Lama's* any Article of Faith more ridiculous than that is? but what follows is ſomewhat more unaccountable than the Metamorphoſis of Angels into Profeſſors of the magic Art.

Thou knoweſt, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that the *Europeans* are of Opinion, that Evil came into the World by the Diſobedience of the firſt Man to the Laws of his Creator. He had forbid him the Eating a certain Fruit, of which he nevertheleſs did eat, and was puniſhed for his Diſobedience; for he became liable to Death, and to other Inconveniencies to which Mankind is ſubject. The Chriſtian Doctors are not intirely agreed in the Manner of explaining this Fact; ſome are for adhering to the literal Senſe of it; others pretend to explain it allegorically, and imagine that the Forbidden Fruit was the carnal Knowledge of the Woman. Be this as it will, the *Perſians* equally reject both Opinions. According to them, the Firſt Man did not commit Sin, but only deviated from Perfection: For he was impeccable. I don't wonder that the *Perſians* think the Firſt Man impeccable, ſince the *Europeans* maintain that their Sovereign Pontiff is infallible.

See now by what Cauſe the Common Father of Mankind loſt all the Benefits which he enjoy'd. *Adam* had been created in the fourth Heaven, long before the Earth was. God had permitted him to eat of the Fruit of all the Trees that were in his happy Manſion; but warned him not to taſte Wheat, becauſe if he eat only of the Fruit of the Trees, thoſe Aliments wou'd ſo perfectly digeſt with him, that all the groſs Parts would eaſily

evacuate through the Pores, but that if he made use of Wheat for his Nourishment, it would produce a Husk in his Stomach which could not be dispell'd thro' the Pores. Now this Husk being nasty Ordure which would defile the Place where it was laid, *Adam* would be under a Necessity of going out of Paradise to discharge it. *Eve*, the Wife of *Adam*, did not give heed to this wholsome Advice, nor reflected on the Danger she was in of being obliged to ease Nature, but eat of the Wheat, and so did *Adam* her Husband, by which means their Stomachs were full of a Matter which could not evaporate thro' the Pores but was forc'd to take its Course thro' the lower Parts. *Gabriel* perceiving this, made haste to turn *Adam* and *Eve* out of Paradise, for fear lest they should defile it, which would certainly have been the Case, if he had delay'd but a Moment longer; for 'tis probable, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, by *Gabriel's* quick and blunt Behaviour, that Matters were very pressing downwards, and that the Gates of Paradise were not free of a bad Scent. What Pity is it, for the Sake of the whole Human Race, that the Nutriment of Wheat was so heavy! If *Adam* and *Eve* had never evacuated, their Posterity would have been for ever happy! Alas! ought there not to have been some Conveniencies in Paradise, and the Soil to have run off into the fifth or sixth Heaven!

Is it to be supposed, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that a People, who have so excellent and so wise an Idea of the Divine Being, should give credit to such Fables, and tack the most ridiculous Tales to the sublimest Truths! Oh! how hard a Matter is it for Men to argue consequentially, and to walk long without losing their Way! It may be said of all the Nations in the World, that happy are they which

which believe the fewest Absurdities; for there is none but what adopts several as essential Points of their Religion. In this vast Universe, there are a few Men scatter'd here and there in the several Parts of it, who sigh for the Blindness of their Countrymen; but for their own Safety and Quiet are forced to keep Silence. Error has terrible Arms to support it self every where. It would be as dangerous for a *Persian* Philosopher to banter the Pain of the Stomach in *Adam* and *Eve*, as for a wise *Italian* to laugh at the pretended Infallibility of a Man who he sees plainly is mistaken every Day of his Life. The *Persian* would be impaled at *Ispahan*; the *Italian* burnt at *Rome*. An *English* Merchant of my Acquaintance assured me, that he saw a Man committed to the Inquisition, who had committed no other Crime but shrugging up his Shoulders at the Sight of a Score of People prostrate at the Feet of a Statue set up in the Corner of a Street.

Do'st thou believe, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that 'tis more ridiculous to suppose Mankind unhappy, because their First Parent was oblig'd to submit to one of the most essential Laws of the Nature of Bodies, than to inclose the immense Being, the Supreme Being, in a Piece of Wood, or at least to pretend that there's a direct and immediate Relation between such Piece of Wood and the Divinity. The *Europeans* pretend to be the wisest and most learned of Men; but truly, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I don't see that they have those great Advantages which they fancy they enjoy over other Men. I had several Disputes upon this Subject with our Friends the Missionaries, and prov'd to them that I thought there was no Reproach that they cast upon other Nations, which they might not as justly retort upon them. I return to the

Persians, without insisting farther on the Vanity of the *Europeans*, whom thou knowest as well as I do.

The Manner of this World's first Appearance is a great Article of Dispute among the *Persian* Doctors: Some will have it, that the Divinity produc'd all Beings in a Moment: Others, on the contrary, and they are numerous, condemn the former as Heretics, and make the Divine Being as slow in this Performance, as a Workman who is puzzled in the Framing of a Piece of Work which he has undertaken. It seems to me, dear *Tn-Che-Chan*, to be an Absurdity to think, that the Divinity should be several Days in doing what he had a Mind to perform. For as soon as he wills a thing, the Effect always suddenly follows that Will. He will'd that the Universe should be form'd, and it was form'd.

A Missionary with whom I was discoursing one Day of the general Opinion of the *Europeans* that God was six Days in finishing the World, told me, that several Great Men among them had been of my Opinion, and believ'd that the total Production of the Universe was perform'd in an Instant.

"One of our primitive Fathers, *said he to me*, "pretends that those Days are to be taken in a figurative Sense, to express the Relation there is "between the Creation and the Glory of the Creator. A skilful *Jew*, *added the same Missionary*, "very well vers'd in the *Jewish* Law, will have "it also that *Moses* the first Legislator of the "*Jews*, and whose Opinions have been received "and adopted by the Christians, admitted of the "Distinction of Days only to denote some Order "in the Creation."

The Number of the Heavens is another Ground of Dispute between the *Persian* Doctors. They who

who adhere only to the Text of the Alcoran say, there are seven. Others are for explaining those seven different Heavens by the Spheres of the Planets, and multiply them to ten. Heavens enough! o my Conscience, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*. The Number of Hells is with other People not much less. I am rather for the first Multiplication than the second, tho' they are both equally insignificant; but the Idea of the one is pleasant, which certainly is more than can be said of the other.

Farewel; and let me hear from thee.

LETTER XXVIII.

From TIAO *at* Moscow *to* SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris.

I HAVE now been two Days at *Moscow*, but dear *Sieou-Tcheou*, 'tis impossible for me to express the Fatigues that I have undergone in my Journey, tho' thou wilt easily imagine the Difficulties and Perplexities that attend such as travel thro' so many different Countries, for most part Desart, or inhabited by *Barbarians*, as all those Nations ought to be called, which lye between the *Empire* of *China*, and that of *Muscovy*. Tho' they are for most part subject to one or other of those two Empires, yet they have very little Resemblance to the Nations which they depend on. Thou wilt undoubtedly be very glad to be

informed of the Manners and Customs of those People, almost unknown to the rest of the Universe. I will do the best I can to gratify thy Curiosity.

When I arrived at the Great Wall which separates *China* from *Tartary*, I was very curious to view a Work which cost so much Labour and Treasure. This Wall extends from East to West, and rises every now and then according to the Situation of the Ground, over very steep Rocks. 'Tis every where fac'd with Bricks, and flank'd with great Towers, except in some Places that are not so much exposed to the Incursions of Enemies, where 'tis form'd of Clay very well beat and harden'd. A great Number of Forts and Towns are built along this Wall, which serve as Garrisons for the Soldiers to defend it, and form a second Barrier, which is the Security of the first.

'Twas for an important Reason that this Wall was erected in five Years time by Order of the Emperor *Tsin-Chi-Hoang*. Tho' 'tis twenty-five Feet in height, and broad enough for six Horsemen to ride abreast upon it without being crowded, the Expence which so immense a Structure cost was not grudg'd, because the whole Empire was thereby covered from the Incursions of the *Tartars*, and there was nothing more to apprehend from their unexpected Incursions, which had created great Disturbances to the very Heart of the Government.

After having passed this great Wall, I found some Towns intirely depopulated, which appear'd by their Ruins to have been once very considerable, there being very fine Temples and Statues, the Workmanship of some good Hand, but all intirely abandoned. I ask'd my Guides what was the Reason of the total Devastation of this Country?

Country? One of 'em, who seem'd to understand History, told me, that several Ages ago a *Tartar* Prince who resided in the chief of those ruin'd Towns, was at War with one of our Emperors, who having vanquish'd him, drove him out of his Dominions, and made all the Inhabitants Slaves. Thus we sometimes see, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, a whole Nation perish by the Folly of its own Sovereign, or by the Cruelty of some other.

I was several Days more in my Travels before I came to the *Daurs*, whose principal City is *Xai-xigar*, but 'tis very small. The others, which are about five or six in Number, can only be look'd upon as Villages. These People are the Subjects of our Emperor, and pay a respectful Submission to all his Orders. The Governors, and other Officers, who are sent from Court to demand the Tribute, abusing their Authority, often take Women from their Husbands, and use them as if they were by right their own. The *Daurs*, who are accustom'd to a blind Obedience, don't murmur, or at least only vent secret Whispers against such Violence. Necessity and Custom taught them to practise what Ambition and Policy dictate to so many *French* Courtiers as make an Advantage of the Tenderness of the Prince or of his Ministers, and patiently bear with their Wives voluntary Breach of conjugal Infidelity.

The Religion of the *Daurs* is more ridiculous and foolish than that of *Lao-Kium*'s Adherents. What would'st thou say, dear *Sieou Tcheou*, thou wise Disciple and Sectary of *Confucius*, who do'st admit, as well as thy Master, of the Existence of one Eternal Intelligent Principle Author of all Beings, if thou did'st but see the barbarous and senseless Ceremonies of the *Daurs*? How would'st thou bewail the Blindness and Folly of Human Under-

Understanding? This so much boasted Reason which is the peculiar Portion of Mankind, of what Use is it to many? 'Tis not of near so much Service to them, as the Instinct granted to Beasts; for they act with Uniformity at least, they behave agreeable to Nature, and don't do things which are directly the Reverse of what they ought to do. They find in their Instinct a much safer Guide, than frail Mortals do in their Reason.

The *Daurs* don't worship a Beneficent God, but pay a superstitious Adoration to a Mischievous Deity that delights to persecute Mankind. The Christians say, that this Deity is the Devil, a malignant Spirit, whom they are almost as much in fear of, as the *Daurs* are; but they don't honour it as the *Daurs* do, who, when they worship this malicious and pernicious Deity, both the Men and the Women meet at Midnight in a Room which serves them for a Temple. One of the Congregation lies down upon the Ground, and while he is in this Posture, the rest make horrible Outcries and Howling, to which infernal Music they add the Beat of a Drum; and after the Noise has lasted about two Hours, the Man that was lain down rises up again, and assuming the Air and Deportment of a Person inspired, he propheſies what is to happen to all that ask him.

In most Countries, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, they are the *Bonzes*, the *Bracmans*, and the Priests, who abusing the People's Credulity, draw them into the grossest Superstitions; but here is an entire Nation which is the Author of its own Follies, a sad Proof of the Byas of all Men to Fanaticism! When they are not deceived by others, they deceive themselves, and with them Superstition never loses its Prerogatives.

The

The *Daurs* dwell in Houſes made of Clay, covered with Reeds, and have but one Room, in which they make a Hole in the Middle of the Cieling to let out the Smoak; nevertheleſs they have ſeveral Windows all round.

Their Manners and Cuſtoms are of a-piece with their Religion, and truly worthy of it. They keep their Dead three Days above Ground, after which they lay them in ſhallow Graves, where they leave an Opening towards the Head of the Corpſe, and thro' this Hole the Kindred give it Victuals and Drink every Day, preſenting it to the Mouth in a large Spoon. This Ceremony laſts ſeveral Days, after which they cover up the Grave, and the dead Corpſe is no more ask'd to eat or drink. That Men, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, could imagine a Thing of which they ſee the Deſtruction, a Carcaſs which putrifies before their Eyes to have need of Nouriſhment, and that they ſhould carry Proviſion to it every Day, what Folly is there of which, after this, we may not think them capable! I repeat it again, what's become of Reaſon with a great many Men? Why do I ſay with many Men, when there are intire Nations that make no uſe of it? The *Daurs* act the Madmen during their whole Lives, which they ſpend in howling Invocations to a malicious and cruel Deity, and in carrying Viands ready dreſs'd to dead Bodies: Theſe are really their moſt ſerious and religious Occupations. Have they any Share of Reaſon? How comes it then that they make no uſe of it? and if they do, what Kind of Reaſon is that which authoriſes the greateſt of Follies?

We will quit the *Daurs*, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, and proceed to the *Targaſins*, into whoſe Country I entered after I left the *Daurs*. The *Targaſins* have a free Government, but they nevertheleſs pay a Tribute

Tribute to our Emperor. They, like their Neighbours, worſhip an evil Deity who perſecutes Mankind. When one conſiders to what Cauſes the Eſtabliſhment of ſuch extraordinary Worſhip may be owing, Fear ſeems to have been the principal Motive. Men don't trouble their Heads about the Reception of a Beneficent Being, becauſe they think Happineſs is what they have a Right to; but perceiving that they were every now and then liable to Evils, which it was not in their Power to prevent or to avoid, they thought there muſt ſurely be a foreign Cauſe which ſent it to them; and ſo much did they long to avert thoſe Evils, and to get rid of 'em, that it put them upon having Recourſe to that foreign Cauſe to deify it, honour it, and fear it.

I am perſuaded, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, that had it not been for the Philoſophers, *i.e.* that handful of virtuous Men, who ſeem to be of a different Nature from the reſt of Mankind; had it not been, I ſay, for thoſe Philoſophers, the Worſhip of a wicked Deity would have been eſtabliſhed all over the Earth. Fear has much more Influence upon Mankind than Gratitude. For one Man who is virtuous purely out of Love to Virtue, and from a grateful Mind for the Favours which he has receiv'd from Heaven, there are 10,000 that only avoid Sin for fear of being puniſh'd for it. If there were a People that believ'd, as the *Epicureans* did, that the Heavens can do nothing towards the Misfortunes of Mankind, thoſe very Heavens would be no more in their Eſteem than the true Divinity is by the *Dauts* and *Targaſins*.

When I left the Nation laſt mentioned, I came among the *Tunguſes*, who are the firſt People towards *China*, that own the Authority of the Czar, and

and have much the same Manners and Religion as the *Daurs* from whom they pretend to be descended.

From the Country of the *Tunguses*, I passed to that of the *Barates*, who are a richer People than the former, but every whit as senseless and ridiculous in what relates to Religion, which is nevertheless very plain and easy; for it principally consists of a Ceremony which they perform once or twice in a Year. They put Goats and Sheep alive upon a Spit, and then stand round making respectful Bows to them till they are expired. There's a Nation for thee, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*, which puts their Deities on a Spit, and kills them in order to do them Honour! Where is the Reason of the *Barates*? Undoubtedly with that of the *Daurs* and the *Tunguses*. These same *Barates* pay a Worship also to the *Sun* and *Moon*, and bend the Knee before those Planets, but shut their Teeth close and don't mutter one Word. These Prayers are of a singular Taste, yet they might be approv'd even by the Philosophers, because 'tis the Heart and not the Tongue that ought to implore the Assistance of Heaven. But is it likely, that People who have so bad a Notion of the Deity as the *Barates*, can address him in Language worthy of him. The most extraordinary Circumstance in the Religion of this People, is their Manner of dealing with their Priests; for when the Fancy takes it in their Heads, they kill them upon a Pretence that *'tis necessary to send them into the other World, to the End that they may pray to God for them.*

Among the Singularities in this immense Universe must be reckon'd, dear *Sieou-Tcheou*, this Custom of the *Barates*. In all other Countries, the Priests, so far from any Danger of losing their own

Lives,

Lives, have those of other Men intirely at their Disposal. The *Bracman* and the *Bonze* in many Places drown the Altars of the God they serve with human Blood. The *Europeans* are no less subject than the *Indians* to the Caprices of their Priests; whenever their Inquisitors their Pontiffs, have a mind to it, they shed the Blood of those who displease them, and take what Spoils they please to enrich themselves. All the Calamities of *Europe* have been occasioned in a manner by the Priests, and those in the other Parts of the World generally flow from the same Source. The *Barates* are the only People, who, not content with having defended themselves against the Power of the Priests, give them the same Measure that they mete to others abroad. Ah! how happy would it be, dear *Sieou-Tcheou*, for many States, and especially for those of *Europe*, that they had the same Sentiment as the *Barates*, and that their Custom of sending Priests from this to pray in the other World was also introduced among them, provided it was not abused, and only made use of in certain Cases! As soon as an ecclesiastical Cabal should offer to disturb the public Tranquility, so soon an ample Deputation of Mediators should be sent into the other World. Should ambitious Priests attempt to incroach on the Rights of their Sovereigns, dispatch another Embassy of fresh Intercessors; in short, upon all Occasions when the Case required it, the Men, whose Province it is to pray in the other World, should be sent thither, as soon as they grow troublesome in this.

The Custom of the *Barates* is blameable because there is neither Reason nor Rules in observing in it; but if it was limited by certain Laws, if it was not dictated by meer Caprice, if it was conducted by Reason, if Policy had a Share in it,

'twould

'twould perhaps be the wiſeſt Cuſtom in the Univerſe, and the only true Means to make the Prieſts in Love with Peace and Union. For if they had not a Mind to be forc'd to ſhift their Situation, they would have nothing more to do than to perform all their Duties. And what Happineſs is there which a State would not enjoy, where all the Prieſts were virtuous, or at leaſt ſtrove to be ſo?

From the *Barates*, I went to the *Oſtiakes* who dwell in Huts of the Bark of Trees bound together with the Guts of Deer. They agree, that there is a Sovereign Being the Lord of Heaven, who governs all the World, and yet what is very unaccountable they pay him no Honour, but adore Wooden Images. Every Inhabitant has his particular Idol, which he takes great Care to adorn with a Robe after the *Ruſſian* Manner, gives it thick Milk to eat every Day, puts it into its Mouth with a Spoon, and it runs thro' the Holes which are in the Breaſts. The *Oſtiakes* make no Prayer to thoſe Idols, all their Worſhip conſiſting in certain Grimaces and in Whiſtling, as Men do for their Dogs. Where now is the Reaſon of theſe People, dear *Sioeu-Tcheou*? With thoſe that we have been ſpeaking of. The groſſeſt of all Follies is that of acknowledging a Supreme Deity, and not honouring it. To feed a Piece of Wood with thick Milk, and to implore that Wood with a Whiſtle! Alas! What Abſurdities does not the Mind of Man give into, and what Extravagancies does it not conſecrate under the Name of Religion!

Fare thee well, dear SIOEU-TCHEOU; *I will write to thee in my next Letter what I obſerv'd of greateſt Curioſity in the reſt of my Journey.*

LET-

LETTER XXIX.

From SIOEU-TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

THOU wilt complain perhaps, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, of my Silence; but tho' I have not wrote to thee for ſome time paſt, only charge it upon the Multiplicity of Affairs that has taken it up; and inſtead of blaming me, pity me that I have not had a Moment's time that I could call my own.

For near two Months paſt, I have been engaged with a Couple of Authors, to whom I imprudently devoted my Time, in hopes that they would furniſh me with the neceſſary Diſcoveries for attaining to the Knowledge of the *European* Sciences. Indeed, they have been of ſome Uſe to me; but they have dragg'd me in *nolens volens* into all their Projects and Competitions, and what is worſe, into their Litterary Quarrels and Diſputes. A-while ago one of them came into my Room, and being mad and almoſt depriv'd of the Uſe of his Reaſon, he ſaid, "One of the moſt cruel and mortifying "Things in the World has happened to me; an "infamous Libel is juſt publiſhed againſt me full "of Calumnies, the moſt falſe, and the moſt pro-"voking. What vexes me moſt is, that the Au-"thor of this very Libel owes his Life and Ho-

"nour

" nour to me; yea, *morblieu*, if it had not been " for me, he had ſmoak'd like a Lime-kiln and " been burnt, as he deſerved, in the *Place de Greve*. " To requite me for my Favours, he uſes me with " the blackeſt Ingratitude. After this, what is " there which one ought not to expect from the " Diſhoneſty of Mankind?"

" The Public, *ſaid I to this Author*, will do " you Juſtice. The Contempt which your Ene- " my would fain create for you, will rebound up- " on his own Head. You know, that Merit alone " is enough to procure Scandal. If you had leſs " Ingenuity, leſs Reputation, you would have fewer " Enemies. Be eaſy therefore at an Accident " which is much lighter than you imagine. Re- " cal to your Aid that Philoſophy which you take " ſuch Pains to cultivate; for there are ſome Oc- " caſions in which there is an abſolute Neceſſity " of our practiſing the Leſſons that are given to " others. You ſeem to be ſo dejected, that I ſhould " think you are a Philoſopher in Speculation only " and not in Practice. What becauſe of ſome in- " jurious Reflections which a Man caſts upon you, " will you ſuffer yourſelf to be robb'd of your " Reaſon; and ſhall that ingenious Author, who " in all his Writings ſeems to be ſuperior to all " Events, ſuccumb under one which ought only to " excite his Contempt and his Indignation? Your " Advice, *reply'd the Author*, would be very good, " if I was a *Chineſe* like yourſelf, and if I were " not to live and dye with the *French*; but if " you did but know what Pains Innocence muſt " be at to juſtify itſelf with thoſe People; if you " knew how greedily they are to ſwallow every " Tale that has a Tendency to deſtroy a Perſon's " Reputation; if, in ſhort, you were ſenſible of " every ill Conſequence which is to be appre-

" hended

" hended from Calumny in these Parts, you wou'd " soon be of another Mind, and pity me as much " as you now seem to blame me. 'Tis true how- " ever that I have one Way left to defeat the " Forgeries of my Enemy. The following is a " solemn Recantation which he has made before " the chief Judge of the Police. *I declare that* " *I am not the Author of the Libel printed in the* " *Title of* VOLTEROMANIA; *that I disown it* " *from the Beginning to the End; that I look* " *upon all the Facts charged upon* M. de V*** " *in this Libel as Calumnies; and that I should* " *think it a Dishonour to me, to have the least* " *Concern in them, having all the Esteem for him* " *which is due to his Talents, and which the Pub-* " *lic with so much Justice pays him.*

Scarce had the Author finish'd the Reading of this Recantation, when looking at him with Astonishment, I said to him, " What, alas! after such " a Piece as this, of which you are in Possession, " and which you may make public whenever you " will, are you still afraid that you shan't unde- " ceive the World? If this be the Case, the " *French* have only Eyes and Ears to see and hear " Evil, and shut both against those things that " are Good." I could make it out to you, *reply'd the Author*, that what you say is too true; but this is not a Place to enter an Action against my Countrymen, and to shew you how fond they are of Slander and Calumny. I will only take Notice to you, that my Enemies may be apt to publish that I obtain'd this Recantation thro' Favour, and that my Calumniator has retracted what he said purely to avoid all the Vexations of a tedious Prosecution. *Said I to the Author*, " You " take Men to be worse than they really are. Why " do you aim to put yourself to needless Trouble,

" and

" and how comes it, that you take a Pleasure in " creating Monsters to fight them?" *I am suspicious and fearful*, reply'd the Author, *because the Evils that I have formerly suffered, have rendered me diffident of the Success of every thing that depends on Men's Honesty.* And 'tis this same Diffidence which has engaged me upon this Occasion to fortify myself, with several other Pieces that render this first still more authentic.

Thou wilt perhaps be curious, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, to see these Pieces. He gave me a Copy of the Chief of 'em, which are as follows, *viz.*

A Letter from the Abbe des Fontaines *to M.* de V***, *written in* 1724, *upon his Departure from the Prison of* la Bisetre, *the* 31*st of* May.

" I Shall never forget the infinite Obligations I " lye under to you: Your good Nature is even " superior to your good Sense; and my whole " Life ought to be employ'd in expressing my " Gratitude to you. I conjure you to grant me " one Favour more, which is to obtain the Re- " cal of the *Letter de Cachet* which has taken " me from the Castle of *la Bisetre*, and banish'd " me to thirty Leagues distance.

Sign'd, DES FONTAINES.

Copy of a Letter from M. de St. Hyacinth *to M.* Raimond de St. Mark, *the 9th of* May, 1739.

" YOU did me Justice, Sir, when you ex- " press'd your Assurance that I had no Cor- " respondence with the Author of *Volteromania* " whoever he is; and I protest to you, that even " at this time I have not read that Piece through-

" out.

" out. I only caſt my Eyes upon it, becauſe I
" was told that the Author had therein quoted me
" with regard to M. *de V****; the Sight of which
" made me very angry. 'Tis true, that one cou'd
" expect no leſs from a Work of that Nature.
" I have been told, that M. *de Voltaire* deſpis'd
" that mean Performance to ſuch a Degree as
" not to vouchſafe it an Anſwer. He is perfectly
" in the right, ſuch Works being fated to periſh
" as ſoon as they come out; ſo that nothing can
" preſerve 'em but to mention them. M. *de V****
" has better Work upon his Hands; for while he
" cultivates the *Muſes*, he learns of them to mount
" up into the tranquil Regions to which the Va-
" pours of the Earth never aſcend, *Sapientum tem-*
" *pla Serena*, &c."

Copy of a Letter from the Preſident de Meynieres, *Brother-in-law to M.* Heraut, *Lieutenant-General of the* Police *at* Paris, May 3. 1739.

" MHERAUT did no more than Juſtice to
" M. *de Voltaire*, by ordering all the Co-
" pies of *Fore*'s Libel to be ſeized, and by forc-
" ing the Abbe *des Fontaines* to diſown the *Vol-*
" *teromania*, &c.

Copy of a Letter from M. Tiriot *to M.* de Voltaire, Aug. 16. 1736.

" THE Abbe *des Fontaines*, when he went
" from *Biſſetre*, wrote a Piece againſt you,
" intitul'd, *An Apology for M.* de Voltaire. 'Tis
" an Apology ironical and barbarous. That you
" have got by ſaving him from Deſtruction, *&c.*

Copy

Copy of another Letter from the ſaid M. Tiriot, Jan. 14, 1739.

" I Give the Lye to the Impoſtures of a Slan-
" derer; I deſpiſe the Encomium he beſtows
" on me; and I declare publickly, as I ought to
" do, my Eſteem, my Friendſhip, and my Grati-
" tude for you, *&c.*

Copy of a Letter from the Preſident de Berniere's *Lady to M.* de Voltaire, *the Original whereof was carried to the Chancellor, by M.* d'Argental, *a Counſellor of the Parliament.* Paris, Jan. 9, 1739.

" NOthing comes up to the horrid Abomina-
" tion of the Abbe *des Fontaines*. He is a
" Monſter that muſt needs be quell'd; for he
" publiſhes the groſſeſt and moſt horrible Forge-
" ries. Neither the late M. *de Berniere* nor I, ever
" knew him but by common Fame, nor is he re-
" lated to either of us. 'Tis true, he was ſome-
" what a-kin to M. *de Berniere*'s Mother-in-law;
" but this was nothing to us. You introduc'd
" him to us; and every thing that came from you
" was ſure to be welcome to us. Some time after
" he was confined to the Caſtle of *la Biſſetre*; you
" upon that Occaſion left no Stone unturn'd to
" deliver him from thence; and for this Purpoſe
" you employ'd all your Friends. Verily, it was
" at your Sollicitation only, that M. *de Berniere*
" claim'd Kindred with him, and was engag'd for
" his Life and his Manners, and carried him to the
" River *Bourdet*; for you very well know the
" little Eſteem he had for him, and from the Time
" that he ſtay'd with us, he would never ſee him

" more. 'Tis true, that you hir'd an Apartment " in the House we liv'd in upon the *Key*, where " you also gave a Lodging to *Tiriot*, and that you " paid very well both for yourself and for him. " You have often lent us Money without Interest. " Every Body knows how sorry both he and I were, " when, in 1726, you returned your Apartment " upon our Hands. You endeavour'd to make us " easy, by coming to see us almost every Day while " you stay'd at *Paris*. You even laid out a good " deal of Money, to render your Apartment com- " modious and tenantable. You have the Satis- " faction, dear *Voltaire*, to find that all honest " Men are angry with the Abbe *des Fontaines*, " and seem to share with you in the Resentment " of his odious Calumnies. For my part, I am " continually telling every body the Truths which " I now write to you, *&c.*

Sign'd, LA BERNIERE.

After the Author, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, had read all these Letters to me, he told me, that the Originals were deposited in the Hands of a Notary *. " I " thought it proper, *said he*, to use this Precaution " for the Security of a *Depositum*, which is so " dear to me, and which so authentically justifies " me. What would you have more then, *said I*, " for your satisfaction? I condemned your Un- " easiness a-while ago, and now I blame it still " more. Can you be afraid of Slanders, which " the whole World disavows? All Men of Ho- " nour seem to concur unanimously in your Jus-

* These Letters were deposited with a Notary of *Chaumont* in *Bassigny*, near *Ciney*, the 10th of *May* 1739.

" tification.

" tification. Leave that to them; and do you de-
" pend upon them and the Goodneſs of your
" Cauſe. I ſhould be eaſy, *reply'd the Author*, if
" I was ſure that all Perſons who have read my
" Enemy's defamatory Libel, did likewiſe ſee the
" Pieces in my Juſtification. I have ſent them to
" ſome of my Friends, to make uſe of them when
" Occaſion ſhall preſent. As you have a Correſpond-
" ence with ſeveral Men of Learning in foreign
" Countries, I could wiſh you would be ſo kind
" as to communicate them to 'em. The learned
" Men of my Acquaintance, *ſaid I*, are travelling
" *Chineſe* like my ſelf, who ſcarce ever enter into
" the particular Quarrels of the *European* Wri-
" ters. They read their Works for their Inſtruc-
" tion; but don't care for ſuch as are full of In-
" vective. You have no need to juſtify yourſelf
" to my Friends; your being injur'd is enough to
" induce them to take your Part."

All that I ſaid to the Author did not prevail with him to alter his Deſign, he ſtill inſiſted on it, that I ſhould undertake to inform my Correſpondents of the Injury that had been done to him. At length being tired, rather than convinc'd by his Inſtances, " Before I ſatisfy you, *ſaid I*, 'tis neceſſary that " I ſhould ſee with my own Eyes, whether you " are ſo grievouſly affronted as you pretend. If " this be not the Caſe, I ſhould fall into the very " Error for which you reproach your Enemy; I " ſhould publiſh Things which would certainly " blaſt his Reputation for ever, and cover him with " Confuſion. When I know that you are grievouſly " offended and ſlander'd, I ſhall take a Pleaſure " in helping to juſtify you. Don't be offended " that I uſe this Precaution; for ſometimes Au-
" thors are ſo touchy, that they miſtake ingenious " Banter, or gay and ſprightly Reflections, for cruel

" proaches. If a Man has any Senſe or Learn-
" ing, be it more or leſs, he never cares to be
" criticiſed; Self-conceit magnifies Objects ex-
" ceſſively. You know that you told me ſeveral
" times, that *** uſed to ſay, that all who blamed
" his Works were Enemies to God and the Go-
" vernment."

The Author, dear *Yn Che-Chan*, put the defamatory Libel above-mentioned into my Hands. I had not read many Pages of it, before I was as angry with it as himſelf. " Verily, *ſaid I to him*, 'tis
" but a Piece of Juſtice to enter into the Re-
" ſentment of a Gentleman ſo groſsly injur-
" ed in ſo tender a Part. If in *China*, ſuch a
" Satyr had been written againſt a Man of Learn-
" ing, who was ſuch an Honour to my Country,
" as you are to *France*, by your Talents and Genius,
" the Impoſtor, who had compoſed it, and the Book-
" ſeller who ſold it, would have been ſeverely
" puniſhed. Our Judges take care that the State
" be not poiſoned with ſcandalous libels. There
" can't be too much Care taken to create an A-
" bomination and Contempt for ſuch Writings;
" and it were to be wiſh'd, that they were as wiſe
" in *Europe*, where the Misfortune is, that nothing
" is ſo eaſy and common, as to print defamatory
" Declamations againſt Perſons to whom the Au-
" thors have no Liking. It ſhould be permitted to
" put Vice to ſhame, but never to ſtain Virtue
" upon any Pretence whatſoever. In *China*, we
" tolerate the ſevereſt Satyrs, when the Reproaches
" thereby caſt upon the Vicious are made manifeſt
" by plain Proofs; which ſo far from prejudicing
" Society, is of real Service to it. A Work
" which diſcovers the Crimes and Impoſtures of
" Knaves and Villains, is a Preſervative againſt
Vice,

" Vice, but that which blackens honeſt Men is a " defamatory Libel.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN, *farewel.*

LETTER XXX.

From TIAO *at* Moſcow *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

AFTER I had left the People of whom I gave thee an Account, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, in my laſt Letter, I arriv'd at the Country of the *Tunguſes Niſoves*, whoſe Manners, Cuſtoms and Religion, appeared to me altogether as extraordinary, as the Cuſtoms and religious Worſhip of the Nations that I had viſited.

The *Tunguſes Niſoves* think themſelves as handſome as the vaineſt *Europeans*, and prefer the Beauty of the Face to all other Qualities. Theſe Barbarians, ſo fond of Beauty, have but one Idea of it, which to civiliz'd People, would ſeem monſtrous. A beautiful Face with them, is one that's all over ſcarified, and theſe Scars and Seams they reckon ſo many Charms; for they don't admire a ſmooth, white and red Face, as they do in *Europe* and *China*. For the Sake of acquiring this monſtrous Beauty, the *TunguſesNiſoves* have the Skin of their Foreheads and Cheeks pink'd in the manner of Em-

broidery; and for this painful and dolorous Operation they make use of a Needle and Thread, dipped in black Grease. When 'tis entered, they draw out the Threads with Violence, and the Mark which it leaves never wears out.

The Habits and Ornaments of the *Tunguses Nisoves*, are exactly of a Piece with their Art of setting off the Face. They are made of Deer-skin, and adorn'd on the Outside with Horse-tails fasten'd to them, and when the Weather is extreme cold, they line the Deer-skin with Dog-skin.

For once, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, fancy to thyself the Form of a Man stalking gravely in the Streets of *Pekin*, with his Face embroidered, like the upper Leather of a *Chinese* Slipper, and his Body deck'd round with Horse-tails made fast to his Clothes, like those Scraps of Fringe which hang to the Waistcoats of the *Europeans*. Do'st not thou believe that the People would be as curious to see such a Man, as the most uncommon and extraordinary Creature living? What would still increase the public Curiosity, is the Head-dress of the *Tunguses Nisoves*, which consists of a Deer-skin with the Horns on it turned downwards, like the Tyes which the *Europeans* have to their Perukes.

The Funeral-Ceremonies among those People are somewhat more singular and senseless than those of their Neighbours. They hang their Dead to Trees, and let them continue there till the Air has rotted off the Flesh, and then they inter the Bones very carefully. As to their Gods, which are little Statues of Wood, they take great care to nourish them well, by giving them Pap Morning and Night.

After I left the *Tunguses Nisoves*, I went into the country of the *Ostiaks*, of whom I have spoke to thee, and having passed through several Countries of very great Extent, inhabited by Nations

as

as contemptible and as ignorant, as the first that I saw, I arrived at *Tobolesk*, the Capital of *Siberia*.

'Tis but a hundred Years at most, that this Province was brought under the Power of the Czars. The *Tartars*, who inhabit *Siberia*, are all *Mahometans*, to whom the *Muscovites* grant intire Liberty of Conscience, and don't trouble their Heads as to Spirituals, so long as they keep them under in Temporals; from whence it happens, that the *Mahometan Siberians* are as much attach'd to the Czar, as his other Subjects; the free Exercise of their Religion being the strongest Tye that binds them to the *Muscovites*.

Nothing, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is more opposite to the Welfare and Increase of Dominions, than the Constraint of Men's Consciences. How comes it to pass, that those Countries in *Europe*, where a Man may follow the Dictates of his Conscience, are so powerful? 'Tis from the Liberty of Thinking, which is the First Appanage of the Human Nature, and of which the Endeavour to deprive a Man infallibly makes him revolt, and pushes him upon dangerous Outrages, or else makes him a meer Brute, and reduces his Understanding insensibly to a Degree even lower than the Instinct of Animals. Of this melancholly Truth, we see Instances in the History of the most eminent People in the World. In all Parts of the Universe, as soon as a Stop has been put to the Liberty of Thinking, the Nations that have been deprived of it, have quite lost their primitive Lustre; whereas those which have preserved that Liberty, have lost nothing at all either of their Glory or their Knowledge. The Nations in *Asia*, which bordered upon the *Greeks*, were as learned as the *Greeks* themselves, so long as they were not subject to the despotic Yoak of the blind *Maho-*

metan Faith: but as ſoon as they were commanded to ſubmit to the *Alcoran*, to call the Validity of it in queſtion no more, and to diſpute the Argument with no other Logic but Sword in hand, they became as ignorant and as barbarous as the Conquerors that depriv'd them of their Freedom of Thinking. And the Inquiſition in thoſe Countries of *Europe* where 'tis eſtabliſhed, has produc'd the ſame Effect, as *Mahometiſm* has in *Aſia* and in *Greece*.

Do but compare the Learning of the *Engliſh*, *Dutch*, *French*, and *Germans*, with that of the *Spaniards* and *Portugueſe*, and examine their Tempers, thou wilt find as much Difference in the general between thoſe People, as between the *Chineſe* and the brutiſh and ſavage Nations their Neighbours. If the *Italians* keep in a Medium betwixt thoſe Nations ſo oppoſite, 'tis becauſe they are not ſuch Free-thinkers as the one, nor under ſuch a Conſtraint as the others.

Do but reflect, dear *Ti-Che-Chan*, upon our own Empire: For, Time out of mind, nothing has been able to impair its Grandeur, or its Glory. The *Chineſe*, at this Day, cultivate the Sciences with as much Care, as thoſe who were the Cotemporaries of *Confucius*; nay ſeveral Branches of Learning have been perfected ſince that wiſe Legiſlator, becauſe People have always thought freely, and becauſe the *Chineſe* have been allowed to make uſe of the only Talent which diſtinguiſhes Man from Beaſt.

In order to know the true Value of the Liberty of Thinking, 'tis neceſſary to compare the Condition of a People while they enjoy'd it, with what it was after being deprived of it, without enquiring into Nations that are meer Brutes. We will inſtance in one which is not abſolutely forc'd

to

to a total Slavery, but ſtill has ſome Means left of making uſe of their Reaſon. For example, there are our Neighbours the *Japoneſe*. Formerly they diſputed with us about the Arts and Sciences. We were once their Maſters; but they ſoon became our Comrades and our Equals. Now, by baniſhing Foreigners, and forcing the Natives of the Country to conform abſolutely to the Religion and Creeds of the State, they are relapſed half-way into their primitive Ignorance. The Mathematics, inſtead of being improv'd to ſuch a Degree of Perfection in their Country as they are in *China*, by the Help of the *Europeans*, are decay'd; their Morals are in Jeopardy every Day; their learned Men are as much infatuated with the Worſhip of their Idols, as the *Portugueſe* Doctors are with that of their Images; and 'tis as impoſſible for the one, as it is for the other, ever to depart from the Folly of their Errors, becauſe a *Japoneſe* cannot think ſenſibly, without having his Throat cut; nor a *Portugueſe* make uſe of his Reaſon, without running the Hazard of being burnt alive.

We will now return, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, to the Account of my Travels. *Tobolesk*, the Capital City of *Siberia*, is built upon a high Mountain, and naturally fortify'd by its Situation. At the Foot of the Rock, runs a River, call'd *Irtis*. I far'd very well in this City, and at little Expence, Proviſions being ſo cheap here, that a Man may have a hundred Weight of Rye-flower for 16 Sous; an Ox for 60.; and a Pig for 30. The River is full of Fiſh; and the Country abounds with Fallow-Deer and Wild Fowl. There's a great Number of Elks, Stags, Hinds, Hares, Pheaſants, Partridges, Swans, Wild Geeſe, Ducks and Storks.

There's always a numerous Garriſon in *Tobolesk*. The *Muſcovites* keep 9000 Men here of

regular Forces; beſides which, there are 4000 *Tartars* diſperſed in the Country, always ready to mount on Horſeback at the firſt Notice. The Biſhop or Chief of the *Siberian* Chriſtian Princes, reſides alſo in this City; and his Juriſdiction extends over all the Province.

The Arts are not unknown in *Siberia*, they having been brought thither by an Accident, which was fatal to the *Swedes*. When *Charles* XII. was defeated at *Pultowa* by the *Muſcovites*, above 10000 of his Soldiers were taken Priſoners on the Banks of the *Boryſthenes*, to which they retired, after the Loſs of the Battle, and the Czar order'd that the unhappy Captives ſhould be diſperſed in *Siberia*. Before their Arrival in that barbarous Country, they ſcarce knew the Uſe of Bread. Theſe *Swedes* being naturally ingenious, and forced to be ſo from the Neceſſity they were under to repair their unhappy Condition by their Induſtry, practiſed all the Arts they had any Knowledge of in the Place of their Exile. The *Swediſh* Soldiers peopled *Siberia* with Bakers, Shoe-makers, Taylors, Drapers, Carpenters, Maſons, Goldſmiths, *&c.* The Officers turn'd Painters, Architects, Teachers of Languages, *&c.* Some taught the Mathematics; others to ſing and dance; and in a little time the Face of all *Siberia* was ſo chang'd, that the *Muſcovites* ſent their Children thither, as to a *Schola illuſtris*, for Inſtruction. When the Arts are once known, and cultivated in a Country, they muſt of Neceſſity be always in Progreſſion to Perfection. A hundred Years hence, perhaps the *Siberians* will be as polite as the Nations of *Europe*.

After I had left the Territory of *Tobolesk*, I enter'd into that of the *Wogulskes*, who likewiſe are Inhabitants of *Siberia*; but their Manners and Religion are different from their Neighbours, and they

they are neither *Christian* nor *Mahometan*. The religious Worship of the *Wogulskes* consists in a solemn Sacrifice, which they make once a Year in a Wood, where they kill a living Creature of every Species, of which the Horse and the Tyger are the noblest Victims; and when they have so done, they flea them all, hang the Skins upon the highest Trees, and then fall flat on the Ground, and adore those new Deities, whose Flesh they eat. When they have finished their Repast, they return home, and conclude the Ceremony, saying at the same time, *So much for the Prayers and Ceremonies of this Year*. When the *Wogulskes* are ask'd the Reason of so senseless a Custom; when they are inform'd how ridiculous it is to adore the Skins of Animals, whose Throats they cut but the Moment before, and to change the vilest of Things into Deities; they answer, that their Fore-fathers always did the same; that 'tis not their Business to alter the Customs which they have receiv'd, and that they have not more Wisdom nor Understanding than their Predecessors.

I think the Arguments made use of by the *Wogulskes* the same that are urged by the Generality of the *Europeans*, to authorise their Religion; and they have Recourse almost always to Tradition. When I have reproach'd several of them with certain Customs, which I take to be altogether as senseless as those of the *Wogulskes*, they told me, that they were founded upon Tradition immemorial, received and approv'd by a long Series of Ages. Tho' I made it plain to them, that how ancient soever the Customs were which I condemn'd, they were not therefore the less ridiculous and repugnant to good Sense, I might as well have held my tongue, for they always recurr'd to the Authority of Tradition, which was an Answer they thought

irrefragable; and becauſe certain Nations had believed in, and committed Follies for many Ages, they thought it abſolutely neceſſary, that thoſe very Follies ſhould be perpetuated to Poſterity.

Of all Errors, none is ſo oppoſite to the Edification of Mankind as blindly to adopt Tradition. When People conſent to examine whether they have not been deceived, and whether their Anceſtors had not the ſame Fate, 'tis an eaſy Matter to convince them of the Miſtake of their falſe Tenets; but when they plead the Blindneſs of their Anceſtors in Excuſe for continuing in an Error, and for not giving themſelves the Trouble of conſidering, whether they have been dup'd by thoſe Prejudices, 'tis impoſſible to make them ſee the Clearneſs of Reaſon thro' a Cloud ſo obſcure, and to open the Eyes of People, who ſhut them, that they may not ſee the Light.

I am not ſurpriz'd, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that ſuch Barbarians as the *Wogulskes*, ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be deluded by the Authority of a Tradition, which good Senſe condemns, but am aſtoniſh'd that the *Europeans*, who are in other Reſpects ſo ſagacious, ſhould in ſo eſſential an Article reſemble Men who can ſcarce be thought to deſerve that Name.

'Tis high Time to finiſh my Letter, and the Narrative of my Travels. When I left *Siberia*, I paſſed thro' the Mountains of *Wurchature* into the Provinces of *Muſcovy*; and after a few Days ſtay at *Wollogda*, I arrived at length at *Moſcow*. Since I have been there, I have made it my chief Buſineſs to ſtudy the Temper and Manners of the *Muſcovites*, and to inquire narrowly into a People who, having not yet diveſted themſelves of their old Inclinations, have been ſtruggling for near 30 Years paſt between Prejudices on the one hand, and

and Instructions on the other. What Remarks and Reflections I make thereupon, I shall communicate to thee in my Letters. *Farewel.*

LETTER XXXI.

From SIOEU TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

ONE of my principal Amusements, since I came to *Paris*, has been to observe all the idle Fables and gross Lyes, with which Three-fourths of the *European* Authors stuff their Works. It looks as if the Inhabitants of these Countries were ever inclin'd to vent the absurdest Tales, and what is still worse, to tell them with a grave Air, and in as positive a Manner, as if they had related the most evident Truth. Even those Doctors of *Europe*, who are treated with the most Respect, have not been guiltless, but have ly'd as impudently as others: nay, they have had the Front to say, that they were Witnesses of the very Fables they relate.

The Missionaries sometimes reproach us with saying, that our Books are full of false History, and loose Narrative; but with what Face can they twit us in the Teeth, when they ought to blush for Shame at the Impertinencies, which take up Three-fourths of their Countrymen's Compositions.

To

To give thee an Idea of the Assurance with which the *Europeans* tell Lyes, I will impart some of those Stories to thee, which I have read in their ancient and even some of their modern Authors, by which means thou wilt see, that the Establishment of Lyes in the Place of Truth, by the most celebrated *European* Writers, is not an Invention of yesterday.

The narrow Limits of our Letters not allowing me to communicate every thing to thee which shock'd me most, I shall confine my self to one single Point, namely to what those Writers have asserted of the Shape of certain People in the World. Thou would'st be apt to imagine, that having at least a Regard to Probability, they would have contented themselves with giving the most absurd and false Relations of their Manners and Customs; but as if this was not enough, they have presum'd to give them an odd Shape intirely different from Human Nature. Not content with setting themselves up for Legislators, and establishing Laws and Customs, they have set up for Creators, and have made new Men, as different from one another in their Form, as the *Chinese* and their *Cariers* are in their Manners and Inclinations.

An ancient Christian Doctor having advanced in one of his principal Tracts*, that it was not impossible to find a whole Nation which had but one Eye, and that too in the Middle of their Foreheads, gets over that Doubt, and soon after affirms in another Treatise, that it was a Fact, and, which is more, protested that he was a Witness of it†. "When I was Bishop of *Hippo*, *said he*,

* *Augustin de Civitate Dei* Lib. xvi. cap. 8.

† *Idem* in his xxxvii^th^ Sermon to the Brethren in the Desert.

"I made

" I made a Voyage to *Ethiopia*, in Company of " certain Servants of *Chriſt* to preach the Holy " Goſpel there; and in the Southern Provinces of " that Country I actually ſaw a People who had " but one Eye, and that in the Middle of their " Foreheads."

Thou wilt perhaps be aſtoniſh'd at the Aſſurance with which this Author after his own Fancy creates a Nation of *Cyclops*, which never exiſted but in the Imagination of the Poets. But he is not the only one that has affirmed ſuch a Falſhood, for he took it from ſeveral Writers that were his Predeceſſors. *Aulus Gellius* * ſays, that in ancient Authors he read of a certain Nation among the *Scythians*, who have but one Eye. I ſhould never have done, were I to tell thee of all the *Europeans*, who have adopted this Fable. If what they ſay were true, half of Mankind would have but one Eye. *Solinus* too † creates two new Nations of *Cyclops*. *The* Arimaſpes, ſays he, *who live about* Beſgulbra, *near the* Caſpian Sea, *have but one Eye*. The ſame Author ſays likewiſe, that in the *Indies*, there are Men who have but one Eye and one Leg, and yet are very light, and run with great Speed.

Don't wonder, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, to find Nations ſo mutilated, as the *Indians* reduced to one Eye and one Leg only, when there are People that have no Mouth nor Tongue. This is another Prodigy, which is the leſs to be doubted, becauſe above ten celebrated *European* Authors atteſt the Truth of it. *Pomponius Mela* ‡ tells us, that beyond the Deſerts

* *Aulus Gellius Noct. Attic.* Lib. ix. cap. 4.

† *C. Jul. Solin. Polyſtor*, cap. 40.

‡ *Sunt autem trans ea quæ modo deſerta diximus multi*

Deserts of *Egypt*, there are several Nations born dumb; that some have a Tongue which renders no Sound; others no Tongue at all; that some have their Lips stuck close to one another, and have only a little Hole under their Nostrils, which serves as a Passage for the Water which those People drink, and for the Corn which they eat. We have just seen whole Nations metamorphosed into *Cyclops*; behold, here are others changed into Canary-birds and Goldfinches, who instead of a Mouth, have nothing but a little Hole to whistle and swallow some Corn. *Julius Solinus* * confirms this notable Story, and *Pliny* does not fail to authorise it: but he goes still farther, for he says, that the *Astromorres* are a People who have no Mouth, and that the Sense of Smelling is their only Aliment †. Thus here is a Nation with whom a Tulip must be worth more than an Ox, and a Violet more than a Sheep. I wonder that *Pliny* did not say, that the *Astromorres* made Honey too, since he had changed them into Bees.

But here are Nations much more extraordinary

multi populi, et quibus pro eloquio nutus est: Alii sine sono linguæ, alii sine linguis, alii labris etiam cohærentibus, nisi quod sub naribus etiam fistula est, per quam bibere avent: Sed cum incessit libido pascendi, grana singula frugum passim nascentium absorbere dicunt. Pomp. Mela de Orbis Situ. Lib. iii. *Art. Æthiop.*

* *Deinde in ultimis Orientis Monstrosæ gentium facies; aliæ sine naribus, æquali totius oris planitie informes habent vultus, aliis concreta ora sunt, modicoque tantum foramine calamis avenarum pastus hauriunt; nonnullæ linguis carent, invicem sermonibus utentes nutibus mo ibusque. Jul. Solin. Polyst.* cap. 43.

† *Plin. Hist. Nat.* Lib. vi. cap. 30.

than

than all those that we have now mentioned, they being composed of Men without Heads. *Pomponius Mela* writes, that the *Blemians* have no Heads, and that their whole Face is in their Breasts. *Solinus* ‡ affirms this for Fact; and *Aulus Gellius* ‖ relates the same.

But even these headless Men have a much better Time on't that the People who have the Heads of Dogs. *Pliny* * gives a Dog's Head to all the *Cynamolgi*; and instead of speaking he makes them bark. *Solinus* thinks too †, that there are such Men. *Simon Majolus* speaks of them at large; and to hear him, one would swear, that he had conversed with them familiarly, and perfectly understood their Language. "When, *says he*, we "have †† passed the Deserts of *Egypt*, we come "to the *Cynocephali*, that inhabit a Country on "the Frontiers of *Ethiopia*, who live upon Deer "and Buffaloes, and have no Voices but whistle, "and their Chin ends so sharp, that one would "take it for the Tip of the Head of a Serpent.

‡ *Blemias, sed nos eos qui vicina rubro mari incolunt, credunt truncos nasci parte qua caput est, os tamen et oculos habere in pectore. Jul. Solin. Polyst.* cap. 44.

‖ *Aulus Noct. Attic.* Lib. ix. cap. 14.

* *Plin. Nat. Hist.* Lib. vi. cap. 30.

† *Cynamolgos aiunt habere caninos victus et prominuta ora. Jul. Sol. Polyst.* cap. 43.

†† The *Dog-Days*, &c. by *Simon Majolus*, Bishop of *Volture*, Lib. ii. p. 104. Note, that in every thing which the Bishop of *Volture* says, he takes *Ælian* for his Authority; and yet that *Ælian* never said one Word of what he quotes him for. After this, you may credit the Quotations of certain Authors just as much as you please.

"Their

" Their Fingers have great long Nails; their Breasts " are like those of Shock-Dogs, and they run very " swift." Now, who would think, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that a People, like the *Cynocephali*, should be as delicate and as vain as the *Chinese* Mandarins, or the Fops of *France*? Yet, if we may credit that same Author, nothing is so true. " The " *Cynocephali* *, *says he*, don't refuse to drink Wine, " and eat willingly of Meat roasted or boil'd; es- " pecially they love their Meat should be well " dress'd: but if it be not very good and nice they " loath it; they love also to be well clad."

These People, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, are really very proud. I make no question, but if the *European* long Perukes had been the Fashion in the Time of *Majolus*, he would have dress'd all the Dogs-heads of the *Cynocephali* with 'em, in a grand Manner, and why should he have made any Scruple to deck them like grave Senators, since in another Place he sets them up for Rhetoricians and Musicians? *When the* Ptolomys, says he, *ruled in* Egypt, *the* Cynocephali *taught Letters, and to play upon the Flute.* As for Players on the Flute who have no Voices, and Masters of Grammar who can't speak, these are such Facts, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, that are fit to be ranked among the impertinent Stories, which the Disciples of *Foe*, tell of their Leader and of their God. Nevertheless I have a much better Liking to *Simon Majolus*'s People, than to those of *Mela*, who have absolutely no Head.

Hitherto we have read of Nations crippled and maimed; we now proceed to others, to whom Nature has been as liberal, as to the others she has been sparing, or rather unkind. *Mela* says, there are a People, whom he places in the Northern

* *Idem* in the same Place.

Islands,

Islands, who have Ears so long, that they have no need of Apparel to shelter them from the Injuries of the Air; so that dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, Taylors would not be able to find any Work among those Islanders, because their Ears alone are their Garments, both for Summer and Winter. *Solinus* says, the *Fanesians* have such happy Ears; and *Pliny* says, that to the inhabitants of the *Scythian* Islands, not far from the Kingdom of *Pontus*, these same Ears are both Cloaths and Bedding.

The Men of this Age, dear *Yu-Che-Chan*, are not so happy to be so much the Favorites of Fortune; for their Ears only serve 'em to hear, and they are even oblig'd to put on Shoes and Stockings to guard their Feet from Flints and Thorns. *Mela* has provided a Remedy for this Inconvenience, by giving Horses Hoofs to the *Oones*, who inhabited the Northern Islands. *Solinus* has done the same Service to the *Hipodes*; and *Pliny* hath shewn the same Favour to both those Nations. *Pausonias* has been so complaisant, as to metamorphose a whole Nation into Monkeys, and adorn'd them with a very fine Tail, of great Use *, to guard them from Flies. *Simon Majole* has also clapp'd Tails to the *English*. He pretends, that several of them had Tails even in his Time; and this Author, who lived about 150 Years ago, and who had a distinguish'd Rank among the *European* Pontiffs, has published a very gross Lye about it. The very Terms he makes use of are these †, "In "*England*, there are intire Families that have a "Tail as a Punishment for the Scorn and Derision

* *Solinus* has said exactly the same thing as *Pausonias*. *Cercopitheci caudas habent*, cap. 40.

† The *Dog-Days*, &c. by *Simon Majole*, Bishop of *Volture*, Lib. ii. p. 115.

"with

" with which their Anceſtors treated one *Auguſ-*
" *tin*, who had been ſent thither by St. *Gregory*,
" and who preached in *Dorcheſter*, by ſticking the
" Tails of Frogs to his Robe." After this, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, believe, if thou can'ſt, the Stories that are told us by the Miſſionaries, and the Infallibility which they aſcribe to their Pontiffs. Here are two, of whom one ſays, he ſaw a People in *Ethiopia* that had but one Eye; and another affirms, that in his Time ſeveral Perſons were born in *England* with a Tail, becauſe they made a Jeſt of St. *Auguſtin*. 'Tis pity that our *Bonzes* in *China* are not acquainted with theſe fine Stories, of which no doubt they would make their Advantage, and give Tails to ſuch as did not treat them with Reſpect.

I ſhould never have done, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, were I to relate all the Lyes with which the *European* Authors have ſtuffed their Books concerning thoſe People, who never had any Exiſtence but in Imagination *. 'Tis true, that for this laſt Century, Writers have been a little more cautious, and ſhew a greater Regard to their Readers; but nevertheleſs they lye very confidently; and tho'

* What is there that has not been written to this Purpoſe? It has been pretended that there have been People grey-hair'd in their Youth, and black in Old Age. Others have had the Soles of their Feet ſo large, that by lifting up their Legs they have ſerved as Umbrellas to ſhade them from the Sun.. *Eſſe rurſum gentem alteram, quæ in juventute ſit cana, nigreſcat in ſenectute ultra ævi noſtri terminos perennantem. Legimus Monoſcelos quoque ibi naſci ſingulis cruribus, & ſingulari pernicitate qui ubi defendi ſe velint a calore reſupinati plantarum ſuarum magnitudine inumbrentur. Jul. Sol. Polyſt.* cap. 65.

they

they don't make Men without Heads, and with only one Leg, and give them their Ears for their Apparel, yet they give to the Nations of which they treat, Manners, Laws, and Cuſtoms, ſo contrary to the Truth, that they might as well have imitated their Predeceſſors.

In the next Letter, which I write to thee, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, I ſhall prove to thee, and prove to thee invincibly, that 'tis impoſſible that ever any ſuch People exiſted, ſo different from thoſe that are known to us. The Chriſtians ſeem even obliged by their Religion to deny that there is any Reality in thoſe abſurd Fables, ſince all Mankind being deſcended from the firſt Man that was form'd by the Divine Power, 'tis impoſſible that Races ſo different ſhould ever be born in the World.

Farewel, Dear YN-CHE-CHAN *; and pray let me hear from you.*

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

From SIOEU TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

AFTER what I said to thee in my last Letter, of all the ridiculous Fables concerning the extraordinary Nations with which the *Europeans* have stuffed their Works, I will now shew thee, that 'tis impossible that such Nations ever had Existence. If it were only said, that in several Countries Men had been seen sometimes who had but one Eye; others, who were born with a Tail, *&c.* I should not think this extraordinary. We see every Day, that Nature forgetting herself, as one may say, for a few Moments, produces Monsters; but this happens very seldom, and she does not suffer those imperfect Creatures to be produc'd afresh *, and to be perpetuated in their Species.

One

* *Cætera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta creabat*
Necquicquam, quoniam natura abstterruit auctum:
Nec potuere capitum ætatis tangere florem
Nec reperire cibum, nec jungi per Veneris res

Multa

One Monster cannot engender another. The Seed of Animals is fixed and regulated. A Lioness always breeds a Lion; and a Woman a Man, according to the general Laws. If, in Violation of the Order of Nature by a criminal Fury or Lechery, a Man has to do with a Beast, and a Woman with an Animal, that which is born of such incestuous Commerce, is condemned to eternal Sterrility, and commonly is but short-liv'd. 'Tis in a manner impossible, that those monstrous Productions, the irregular Compounds of different Animals, can subsist long; for the Difference of the Temper and Constitution of the various Parts of the Animals, which are united together, hinder the Duration of the Monsters. A Horse of three Years old is already vigorous, and in a Condition to run a Race; but a Child of that Age can scarce stand upon its Legs. That same Horse is already old at fifteen Years; but the Child is young. What Relation, Agreement, and Harmony can there be between Members so different, when they are join'd together?

These Reasons appeared so convincing to the Philosophers, that they not only asserted, that Mon-

Multa videmus enim rebus concurrire debere,
Ut propagando possint procudere secla.

Lucret. de Rerum Nat. Lib. v.

Thus Translated by Mr. Creech.

A thousand such in vain arose from Earth,
For Nature, frighted at the ugly Birth,
Their Strength and Life to narrow Bounds confin'd,
Deny'd them Food, or to increase their Kind.

sters

ſters could not live long, but believ'd what was ſaid of them to be all fabulous. "Don't imagine, "*ſaid* Lucretius, that a Seed, compounded of "two different Species, can produce a *Centaur*, "or that there are Mermaids, or ſo many other "Monſters, whoſe Members are ſo diſpropor- "tioned. 'Tis impoſſible that Members ſo op- "poſite to, and ſo different from one another, "can grow and be perfect together, much leſs "attain to a very advanc'd Age *." This ſame Philoſopher, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, had been ſaying a

* *Sed neque Centauri fuerunt, nec tempore in ullo*
Eſſe queat duplici natura, & corpore bino
Ex alienigenis membris compacta poteſtas,
Hinc illinc par vis ut non ſic eſſe potis ſit.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Ne forte ex homine & veterino ſemine æquorum
An fieri credus Centauros poſſe, neque eſſe:
Aut rapidis canibus ſuccinctas ſemi marinis
Corporibus Scyllas et cætera de genere horum
Inter ſe quorum diſcordia membra videmus
Quæ neque floreſcunt pariter neque robora ſumunt
Corporibus, neque proficiunt ætate ſenecta. Id. ibid.

By Mr. CREECH.

But never *Centaurs:* theſe were never known,
That two ſuch Natures ſhould combine in one,
Such diſagreeing Powers; abſurd and vain!
Plain Nonſenſe! Theſe are Creatures of the Brain.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Leſt you ſhould think ſuch Monſters apt to grow
A thoughtful Man above, a Horſe below;
Or *Scyllas*, whom a num'rous Train entwines,
Of half Sea-Dogs, and barks above her Loins;
Or ſuch that live, not grow an equal Time,
And which at equal Years not reach their Prime;
Whom equal Years not fill with youthful Rage,
Nor loſe their Strength again at equal Age.

little

little before, *That there was not a Word of Truth in all that had been writ of the* Centaurs.

Here you see one of the Ancients openly denying the Existence of those Monsters, that were so much talk'd of in his Time. May it not be inferred from hence, that the Existence of 'em must needs be uncertain at least, because it was contradicted by the greatest Geniuses? Why should the Authors who treat of the *Centaurs*, be credited any more than those who say, there never were any? Is it because the former publish Fables and Prodigies? If so, they can only find Credit with such as prefer the Marvellous to Truth and Reason. But for reducing the present Question to a fix'd and evident Point, let us admit it to be true, that there were *Centaurs*, *Satyrs*, &c. it will not follow from thence, that those Monsters could ever form a Nation, for they were by their Nature barren, and consequently incapable of multiplying. How then could they increase to such a Degree as to form Nations? I grant that some Men from a libidinous Passion, have committed the Crime of Bestiality: This may perhaps, in the Course of two or three Centuries, have produc'd seven or eight *Satyrs*. But to suppose that there were Islands and intire Provinces peopled with those Monsters, how could they be produc'd? I see but one Way for it, and that is, to suppose that there had been a Herd of She-Goats, which, like the *Amazons*, came to be covered by the Men their Neighbours, and then returned home to their Pastures. As senseless as this Supposition is, and as ridiculous as this Resource seems to be, 'tis however the only one they can have recourse to, who are of Opinion that there are Nations of Monsters

which have subsisted for several Centuries. The same thing must be said of those Men born without a Head; of others that have the Head of a Dog, &c. and, in fine, of all that I mentioned in my last Letter; for there is as great a Difference between this Sort of Monsters and a real Man, as between such a Man and *Satyrs*, and *Centaurs*.

The Instant that a new human Creature is form'd if it vary ever so little in Figure from our Species, 'tis absolutely no longer the same. A Nation of *Cyclops*, or a People having the Tail of a Monkey, could not exist in the same Manner as a Nation that had the Heads of Dogs. One Eye only, and that placed in the Midst of the Forehead, intirely changes the Order, Harmony and Configuration of the Parts of the Brain; and the internal Construction of such a Head, must be intirely different from ours.

The Christians, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, must upon the fundamental Principles of their Religion, deny the Possibility of the Existence of all those People; for they pretend that all Men derive their Origin from one only Father, form'd in the Beginning of the World by the Divine Power. Now, if this be so, how is it possible that there should be humane Races foreign to that of this First Man? And if those Races really exist, how can it be maintain'd that all Men derive their Origin from the same Father? We have seen, that it is impossible that the human Form could degenerate in intire Nations, and transmute itself into that of Animals; it must therefore necessarily follow, that there were never any monstrous People, or that the different human Races owe their Origin to different Men, form'd at the Beginning of the World.

If

If the *Europeans*, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, did but conſider, they would no doubt reject all the Fables with which they ſtuff their Books, and of which they really ſtrive who ſhall extract moſt from the Works of ſome or other of the Ancients. There are two other Reaſons as ſtrong for rejecting all the fabulous Hiſtories; and they are theſe. If there were ſuch People formerly, what's become of 'em now? How comes it we no longer ſee Nations without Heads; others with but one Leg, *&c?* What have they been extinguiſh'd by Sorcerers, as they had been form'd by ſupernatural Prodigies? Is it not ſurprizing that thoſe People ſhould be quite periſh'd, and no Idea left of their Deſtruction, of the Manner *how*, or the Reaſon *why?* People muſt be very fond of Fables, if they can believe Stories which there's ſuch a Concurrence of Circumſtances to ſhew the Falſhood of.

The ſecond Argument, which proves the Forgery of all theſe Stories is, that at the very Time when there was the moſt Talk of the Exiſtence of thoſe fabulous People, the great Men openly ridiculed every thing that was ſaid of 'em. The Philoſophers were not the only Perſons who rejected theſe Fables; the Hiſtorians, nay more, the Geographers, who were obliged by their Profeſſion to dive to the Bottom of this Queſtion, look'd upon the Exiſtence of thoſe People as a ridiculous Lye, fitter for Contempt than Criticiſm. *Strabo* made a Jeſt of all the Accounts given of theſe monſtrous People.

'Tis my Opinion, that all that has been ſaid of theſe imaginary Nations, is borrow'd from the Poets; and that they never exiſted any where but

in their fertile Brains. The Hiſtorians have taken their Accounts from the Works of thoſe Poets; and the Vulgar, who are always fond of Prodigies, greedily ſwallow'd the extraordinary Stories they told of 'em. The Painters and Engravers having made Pictures of thoſe Monſters, and publiſh'd them, by Degrees the People were ſo accuſtom'd to theſe imaginary Figures, that they thought it was impoſſible but they muſt be real. We read in the Works of one of the ancient Chriſtian Doctors, that * all theſe monſtrous Nations were painted in the Square of *Carthage*, where ſome were ſeen that had but one Eye, and that in the Middle of their Forehead; others had their Feet turn'd inwards; ſome were painted as being of both Sexes; ſometimes active, and at other times paſſive; having the right Breaſt of a Man, and the left of a Woman. Some were repreſented as having no Mouth, and living only by the Air which they drew in at their Noſtrils. There were Men not above a Cubit in Stature, whom the *Greeks* call'd *Pigmies*; Women who were delivered of Children at five Years old, and died at eight; People call'd *Squipodes*, who run very ſwift with two Feet, tho' they have but one Leg, and don't bend their Hams. In the ſame Pictures, Men were repreſented without Heads, having Eyes in their Shoulders.

The Painters, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, have contributed almoſt as much to the fomenting and fortifying of Superſtition, as the Poets. They have been as bold in their Fictions, and the People were even more taken with them than with thoſe of the

* *Auguſt. de Civit. Dei.* Lib. xvi. cap. 8.

Poets,

Poets, becauſe they had them more frequently before their Eyes, and they were repreſented to them in a more ſenſible Manner.

The Poets only ſpeak to the Mind, the Painters to the Eyes; which laſt Manner of Speaking is much more *ad captum vulgi* than the other. The Gods that had been cut out by the Carvers, were eſtabliſhed for a time throughout the Univerſe; whereas thoſe of *Homer* and the Poets, were only known in ſome particular Countries. As ſoon as there were Craftſmen that knew how to make Statues, the People did not want for Deities.

The People did not ſtay for the Poets to inſtruct them to worſhip Stocks and Stones; for Idolatry is more ancient than Poetry, and had its Riſe together with Sculpture and Painting. 'Tis thoſe very Arts, in other Reſpects ſo laudable, that have been the principal Cauſes of the Errors of Mankind, and of the ſilly *Credenda* by which they have been infatuated. After the Sculptor had carved a Deity, he made a *Centaur*; and the *Centaur* was as much admir'd by the Vulgar as the Deity. Then came the Painter, who painted a Man without a Head, and with Eyes in his Shoulders: 'Twas but natural for this new Monſter to enjoy the ſame Privileges as the former. The fooliſh and blind Credulity of the Vulgar is the leſs to be wondered at, becauſe Mankind is ſo addicted to Superſtition, that the very Carver, who had made a God out of a Block of Wood, worſhipp'd his handy Work with trembling. Great Men, who by the Strength of their Genius raiſed themſelves above the Prejudices of the Vulgar, laugh'd at theſe Fooleries; but their Number was very ſmall, and all they could ſay upon this Head, could

not cure the People of their Folly. Can any thing be a more lively Banter of such Deities than *Horace's*, where * he makes the Carver in doubt with himself, whether he should make a God out of a Piece of Timber, or a Bench, till at last he determin'd to carve a Deity?

These smart and ingenious Criticisms had no more Effect upon the Ancients, than those of certain Authors have upon the Understanding of the Moderns. Man in general is born to be the Dupe of his foolish Credulity. Superstition, a Fondness for Prodigies, and Credulity blind his Deceivers, and all these things enter indispensably into his very Essence. If we look into all the Nations of the Universe, we shall find them all running greedily after Fables, and treating People that offer to convince them of their Mistakes, as Men ignorant or wicked.

'Tis time now to conclude my Letter. I wonder, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that I don't hear oftner from thee; and that I have had no Letter yet from

* *Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum:*
Cum faber, incertus scamnum faceret ne Priapum,
Maluit esse Deum. Deus inde ego furum aviumque
Maxima formido; nam fures dextra coercet.
Horat. Sat. Lib. i. Sat. 8.

Which is thus translated by Mr. CREECH.

Long time I lay a useless Piece of Wood,
Till Artist, doubtful for what the *Log* was good,
A *Stool*, or *God*; resolv'd to make a *God*.
So I was made, and hence I grew ador'd,
The Fear of ev'ry Thief, and ev'ry Bird.

our

our Friend *Tiao*, who muſt be arrived by this time at *Moſcow*.

Farewel.

LETTER XXXIII.

From CHOANG *at* Iſpahan, *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

BEFORE I ſpeak of the State of the Arts and Sciences among the *Perſians*, I will mention ſeveral things which principally form their Character.

Faſhion bears no Sway among the *Perſians*, who judge of Cuſtoms not by the Pleaſure they reap from the Novelty, but by the Uſefulneſs of 'em. Time out of Mind their Garb has always been the ſame, becauſe they find it commodious. They laugh at *Europeans*, who are never ſure that the Faſhion won't alter before their Cloaths are worn out. It were to be wiſh'd for the *Perſians*, that they would think as rationally concerning the Luxury and Magnificence of their Apparel; but in this Article they are even more extravagant than the *Europeans*. Their moſt common Turbans coſt 50 Crowns, and ſome no leſs than 500; ſo that the *Perſians* lay out more in the covering of their Heads, than the greateſt *French*

Beaus do in the borrow'd Hair with which they adorn theirs.

Thoſe of Diſtinction in this Country ſcarce put on the ſame Apparel two Days together, while their Fingers are laden with Rings, and their Arms with precious Stones. The Rings are incommodious to ſeveral Devotees, who thinking it indecent to pray to God with ſo many Ornaments, put them off every time they go to Prayers; alledging that People ſhould preſent themſelves humble and poor before the Deity to obtain his Favour. What an excellent Expedient is this to reconcile Vanity with Religion! The Folly of theſe *Perſian* Votaries, is much like that of thoſe Impoſtors, who think they don't perjure themſelves if they ſwear ambiguouſly. Does not the Supreme Being as plainly ſee the Jewels of the *Perſians* in their Pockets, as he does the Reaſon of the Equivocation of Lyars in their Hearts? Nothing is ſo abſurd as to pretend to deceive Heaven; and no body ſtrives to do this more than the Votaries. Some *Perſians* are even ſo ſilly as to have their Diamonds ſet in Rings of Silver, thinking, that when they have no Gold about them, they can pray to the Divinity with Confidence. What Folly, what abſurd Superſtition is this! A Diamond worth 10,000 Crowns when ſet in Silver is reckon'd an Ornament compatible with Humility.

The *Perſians* are ſo exceedingly fond of Jewels, that they don't content themſelves with the Rings on their Fingers, but they hang eight or ten in a Parcel to a String about their Necks, which they place in their Stomachs, between their Robe and their Veſt, and take them off every now and then, to make uſe of 'em as Seals, or to have the Pleaſure

ſure of viewing them, and ſhewing them to their Company.

The Women are not leſs fond of Dreſs than the Men; and indeed 'tis but natural for 'em to indulge this Paſſion to a greater Degree; ſo that they commonly ruin their Huſbands by this Article. The Luxury that prevails in the Seraglio's of private Perſons, exceeds Imagination. They are continually changing their Dreſs; there is a Conſumption of the moſt coſtly Perfumes, and the moſt exquiſite Liquors. Love, which bears the ſovereign Sway in theſe Places, renders the Lovers and the Huſbands equally prodigal; and the Women, who are bred up in Luxury and Idleneſs, mind nothing but to adorn themſelves, to pleaſe their Senſes, and to take their Fill of Voluptuouſneſs.

Since I am ſpeaking of what promotes Luxury, I ought not to omit the Mention of two Things that are great Contributors to this Vice. The firſt is the Averſion which the *Perſians* have to Black, as being a Colour not only melancholy and ſad, but diſmal and odious. At *Iſpahan*, People dreſs indifferently in all Colours, and the oldeſt Perſons, as well as the Youth, dreſs in thoſe that are the moſt gay and moſt ſhewy. If this Cuſtom did not tend to feed Vanity and Luxury, I ſhould like it very well; for 'tis a fine Sight to ſee the public Walks, *&c.* crouded with People dreſs'd in Stuffs ſhining with Gold, or of the moſt lively Colours.

To the Ornaments of Apparel, the Women add ſeveral others to ſet off their Beauty. They don't, like the *Europeans*, paint their Faces with White or Red; but the thickeſt and blackeſt Eye-brows being accounted the moſt beautiful in *Perſia*, ſuch Women as have them not of that Colour, dye

them; and a little above their Eye-brows they place a black Patch, about the Size of the Nail of one's little Finger; and in the Dimple or Pit of the Chin, another little purple Spot, which being made with the Point of a Lancet can never wear out.

The Folly of spoiling the Face, on Pretence of beautifying it, and of attempting to amend Nature by disfiguring it, has been Time out of Mind, and is to this Day, the Humour of almost all Women, be they born in what Country soever. The *European* Women besmear their Faces with White and Red, and upon that disguising Paint they stick abundance of little Plaisters of black Taffata; so that their Face is not much unlike the Skin of a Tyger. But of all the Women, I think there are not any which, in this Respect, come up to the Women of *Caramania Deserta*. For not content with boring their Nostrils, like the Women of some Provinces in *Persia*, and putting a Ring into the Hole with two Pearls at the Bottom, they even pierce the Top of their Nostrils, and there put in a second Ring to which they fasten a Sprig of Diamonds that quite cover one Side of the Nose, like to those Horses to whose Foreheads they fasten great Plates of Copper, which hang down over their Nostrils. But be the Ornaments of the *Caramanians* ever so ridiculous, those of other Women are not a whit less so; all the Difference between their Taste being, which is the most senseless, whether to bore the Nose or Ears.

Not to dwell any longer, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, upon these fantastical Customs, let us return to the Luxury of the *Persians*. The Expence they are at in Horses, is almost as great as their Cost in

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their Women; for they have such Numbers of Horses that their Stables are as well furnish'd as their Seraglio's. When a Person of Distinction makes any Visits, he is followed by three or four spare Horses, led by as many Domestics, each very well mounted. Several Footmen run before, or by the Sides of his Horse, and he is attended by several other Domestics; one carrying his Tobacco-Box; and another an embroider'd Toilet, in which there is commonly a Waistcoat and Cap, &c. All the Horses are very well adorn'd; but that which he rides is always the most magnificently accoutred. The Furniture of Men of Quality is adorned with Plates of Silver or Gold, and often with precious Stones: The Saddles are laced with massy Gold; and the Housings, which are embroider'd sometimes with Pearls, hang very low down to the Knees of the Horse.

So much Magnificence must infallibly be the Ruin of a great many People; but the *Persians* are so far from a Thought of reforming a Luxury, so contrary to the public Welfare, that they authorise it, and contemn those who are so wise as to condemn it. 'Tis a Proverb with them, that a Man is honoured according to his Habit. An insipid ridiculous Opinion this, which degrades Mankind below the brute Beasts, because an excellent Horse will fetch a Price for his own Worth, and a sorry Jade, with a fine Saddle on her Back, is only bought for the Value of her Furniture. What Impertinence is it to make the Merit of a Man depend on a Piece of Embroidery, which too perhaps was made a thousand Leagues from his Country! According to the *Persian* Proverb, their Honour must lye no where but in the Tradesmen's

Warehouſes; and a Knave, who has Money, may ſend his Taylor every Day to purchaſe him Honour and Merit.

After having blam'd the *Perſians* for their being ſo much addicted to Luxury, I ought, on the other hand, to commend their Temperance. They make but two Meals a Day: At the firſt, which is commonly about 11 o'Clock in the Forenoon, they have only Fruits, Milk, Meats and Preſerves, and in the Evening, they eat Meat, but in a very ſmall Quantity. As to their Manner of dreſſing it, 'tis plain, without much Seaſoning. They know nothing of foreign Ragouts, nor of Meats ſalted, pickled, and ſeaſon'd to excite the Appetite. They ſeldom make uſe of Pepper, or other Spices, and then they don't pound them, but chew them whole; to the end that the Stomach may retain the Juice without the Huſk, which is very hard of Digeſtion.

The common Meals among the *Perſians*, whether they have Strangers at Table or not, never laſt but half an hour. The *Europeans* condemn this wholſome Cuſtom, and don't imagine, that the Time which is ſpent at Table, after having taken ſufficient Nouriſhment, is pernicious to the Health of the Body, and the Vigour of the Mind. Debauches are alike hurtful to Soul and Body; they ſtupify the former by degrees, and ruin the latter, in a ſhort time, eſpecially in hot Countries, where they are generally mortal, if continu'd ever ſo little; and we ſee, that *Europeans* who give themſelves up to Intemperance, die almoſt as ſoon as they arrive in *Perſia*. The Variety of Diſhes alone is capable of doing conſiderable Miſchief in very hot Climates; and the different quality of the Juices

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is extremely prejudicial to the Stomach, which is already weaken'd by the vaſt Expence of the Spirits, owing to the prodigious Heat of the Climate. Gluttony is a Vices which carries its own Puniſhment with it all over the Eaſt in general; but perhaps if the People could be Deboſhees and Gluttons with Impunity, they would not be more ſober there than in *Europe*; for moſt of the Virtues of the human Race have no other Source than in Men's own Intereſt. The Vices that are not detrimental to the Health of the Body, are equally in Vogue in all Countries; and People are as revengeful, as great Lyars, as knaviſh and as covetous in the *Indies* and *Perſia*, as in the cold Countries; which is no Argument in Favour of the Temperance of the *Eaſtern Nations*.

One of the moſt excellent Qualities of the *Perſians* is, their Love of Hoſpitality, a Love which can never be enough commended; and which ought to be imitated by all People that ſet up for the Knowledge of Virtue, and Decorums of civil Life. When the Diſhes are ſerved up to Table among the *Perſians*, ſo far from ſhutting the Door, as almoſt all the People in the World do, they invite all that are in the Houſe, and even ſtop their Domeſticks. The Victuals that is left is diſtributed to the Poor, if there any in the Streets; and nothing is ever kept of what has been ſerved at Table.

The *Perſians* ſay, that of all the Virtues Hoſpitality is that which is moſt pleaſing to the Divinity. In the Exerciſe of it they make no Diſtinction of Government, Country, or Religion, and a Gueſt is always with them, a Perſon of Reſpect. They ſay, that one of their antient Patriarchs, whom they

they call *Abraham*, *never eat without a Gueſt*. Upon this Head they tell a Story, that one Day Dinner-time being at hand, and nobody come, this good Man went out of his Tent to ſee if he could find any Gueſt, and that as a Reward for his Piety, there appeared to him in a human Form, three celeſtial Spirits, whom he had the Honour to regale. The *Europeans* tell this Story a little differently, tho' 'tis to be found in the fundamental Articles of their Religion. Nevertheleſs, of all the Virtues Hoſpitality is now the moſt neglected in *Europe*. What a Shame it is for People who pretend to ſo much Politeneſs, to be totally wanting in one of the moſt eſſential Articles of the Law of Nature! The Civilities of the *Europeans* are ſeldom of as much Value as the ruſtic Simplicities of the *Arabians*.

Farewell, and proſper in all thy Undertakings.

LETTER XXXIV.

From SIOEU TCHEOU *at* ROAN *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* PEKIN.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN;

I Have been to paſs a few Days at a City about 30 Leagues from *Paris*, which is the Capital of a Province called *Normandy*. This Town is not ſo conſiderable for it Size, or Buildings, as for the Number of its Inhabitants and the Extent of its Trade. The *Normans* are in general

neral lively, gay and subtle, and succeed very well in the Sciences. The greatest Poets which *France*, if not *Europe*, can boast of, are descended from them. 'Twas the Province of *Normandy* that gave Birth to the two *Corneilles*. As among the Antients *Greece* alone could match a *Sophocles* with an *Euripides*, so with the Moderns there seemed to be a Necessity for *Corneille* to meet with a worthy Rival in his Brother.

It were perhaps to be wish'd for the *Normans*, that they had not such Talents; for a Degree more of Stupidity would no doubt deaden that extraordinary Fondness they have for Law-Suits; and sure I am that they wou'd not go to Law so often; if their fertile and subtle Imagination did not furnish them with Pleas (in favour of the worst Causes) so plausible, as to give them an Air of Probability, and even of Right and Justice. To be a Pleader by a Profession, a Man must have good Parts; I own that the Talent of Chicanry is pernicious to the Tranquility of Society; but after all 'tis still Wit.

The Fondness of the *Normans* in general for Law-suits is almost incredible. I have been assur'd, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that in a hundred Families there are not ten but have some Law-affair in hand. As the Judges, whose Revenues have the Follies of Mankind for their Fund, ought to be under no Pain for fear of seeing them diminish'd, the *Norman* Magistrates may be sure that their Fees will never sink. The *Normans* were always very litigious, but now they are fonder of Chicanry than ever; and every Day produces Law-Suits more singular and extraordinary than other. I will tell thee a Story now I am upon this Subject,

Subject, which will give thee an Idea of the Temper of the *Norman* Pleaders, and of their Law-suits.

In the Country of *Caux* there was a Curate, (which is a Name the *French* give to certain Priests that are charged with the Conduct of the Inhabitants of certain Quarters in a Town, or of all those in a particular Village) who had a mind to have a fine House built, but wanting the most necessary Material for raising such a Structure, which was the Money; he had no other Way to come at it, but by the Sale of some Stock which he was possess'd of. He applied therefore to several Brokers at *Roan*, who, tho' they were well acquainted with all the Quirks of the Law, were afraid to negociate with a Priest of their Country, because they knew but too well, that in *Normandy* the Clergy are too cunning for the boldest Pleaders. At length the Curate had recourse to a certain Bookseller who had married his Sister, whom he importuned so much to take off his Stock, that the Bookseller consented to let him have the Money he wanted. As soon as he had got the Cash, he did not delay to put his Design in execution. An Architect was imployed to draw the Model of a fine Parsonage House, which the Workmen immediately set about; and so quick were they in raising it, that the new House was finished in a trice, like these inchanted Castles mention'd in Romances. While it was building, and even some years after it was finished, the Curate came very often to *Roan*, and made long Visits to his Brother-in-Law, with whom he had taken care to have the best of Cheer; for such coarse Food as Beef and Mutton was too heavy for the Parson's Stomack, nor were such

Fish

Fish as Mackrel, Eels, or Tench, good for his Constitution; he must have Soles, Trouts, &c. The patient Bookseller, considering him as his Brother-in-law, humour'd the Curate's Palate and Fancy, tho' it was against the Grain; tho' he was surprised sometimes, that his dear Kinsman who preached so well upon Temperance, should so little put in Practice the fine Lessons that he gave to other Men. The Curate did not care what he thought, his Head was full of Matters of much more Consequence; he had been a long time plotting with himself to go to Law with the Bookseller, and to recover the Stock which he had given him in Exchange for the Money he had received of him to build the Parsonage-House. Such a Proceeding required mature Consideration, and would have been thought ridiculous in any but a *Norman* Priest; but our Curate did not want for that Chicanry which is innate in his Countrymen. After having paused a long Time, he thought he could not take a better Course than to get off of his Bargain by pleading Damage. The People in *China*, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, as fond as they are of Law, would have laugh'd to have seen a Bonze, near 50 Years of Age, suing at a supreme Tribunal for the Right of Minors. What, *would they say to such a one*, are you an Idiot? For this is the only Case in which you can obtain your Demand. Chuse which you please of the two; either you have the Use of your Reason, or you are deprived of it. If the former, why do you desire to be treated differently from other Men? If the latter be your Misfortune, by restoring you to your former Right, you must have a Guardian appointed to take care of you, and be committed to the Hospital of Fools.

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This no doubt, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, would be the Argument of our Mandarins; but the *Norman* Magiſtrates tho' they don't want for Wit, don't reaſon ſo conſequentially. Too juſt and too accurate a Pleading would ſhorten Law-ſuits, by which the Revenues of the Judges would ſuffer. 'Tis not proper to draw Inferences at the Expence of the Pocket. A *French* Poet might well ſay, *We live in the Courts of Law by other Men's Follies.* Admit that all Men were ſagacious and prudent, what would become of Chicanry? And, without Chicanry, how would that vaſt Number of People live, who have nothing elſe to depend on? The Parſon perfectly knew the Genius of his Country, and therefore he did not ſcruple to commence a Law-ſuit upon ſo falſe and trifling a Plea as he would not have dared to exhibit in any other Country. Tho' he had formed a Reſolution to go to Law, he did not think fit to ſhift his Quarters. He fared well with the Bookſeller, at whoſe Houſe he had good Cheer, and that *gratis*. Where could he have met with ſuch a Hoſt? One ſhould have thought it impoſſible for any but a *Norman* Prieſt to live upon a Man, and at the ſame Time to proſecute him: The Curate however did not deſpair of carrying his Point; or at leaſt flattered himſelf, that he ſhould have gone a good Way in the Suit before his Hoſt knew any thing of the Matter. For this Purpoſe he went and privately conſulted with an Attorney, who unluckily for him, being the Bookſeller's Friend, was ſo aſtoniſhed at his Deſign, that he thought he ought not to conceal it; and therefore he went to the Bookſeller, and told him what had paſſed. The Bookſeller, as much ſurprized as a Man could well.

well be, ran to tell his wife. " Your Brother, " *said he*, is seeking to recover the Estate he sold " us, and which we have so dearly purchased. " Go and talk with him, and endeavour to dis- " suade him from treating us so ill, after the " Services we have done to him. I don't care to " speak to him myself, for fear I should fly into a " Passion, being sure that I could not forbear to " reproach him warmly for his Ingratitude."

The Bookseller going to dine at a Friend's House, his Wife did not remain long alone; for the Parson who had scarce been two Hours before with his Lawyer, came in smiling, to know what there was for Dinner, and ordered an Addition to be made to it of some Pasties, which were sent for in an Instant. Then he sat down to Table, and his Sister let him eat on without mentioning a Word of what she had to say to him; but when Dinner was ended, " Brother, *said she*, I can't " smother my Surprise at your Proceeding. What! " Are you for paying the Obligations you are " under to me and my Husband, by the basest In- " gratitude? Was it not enough for you to have " borrowed a round Sum of Money of us, which " we might have employ'd in our Trade, but " must we lose every Penny of it? *My dear*, " reply'd the Parson, *I don't understand what you* " *mean*; *let us drink about, a little Liquor will be* " *better then all this Nonsense*. 'Tis not such Non- " sense as you imagine, *reply'd the Woman*, and 'tis " a Shame that you should pretend to be so very " ignorant of the Matter, when you have been this " very Morning to see an Attorney to enter an " Action, which may be the Ruin of my Family. " The Parson finding he was detected, answered

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" without any Confusion, *Hold thy Tongue, don't* " *be in such a Passion; 'tis neither against thee,* " *nor against thy Children, that I mean to enter an* " *Action; I shall only go to Law with thy Husband;* " *my Business is with him alone.*"

What do'st thou think of this Distinction, dear *Yn-Che-Chan?* Is it not comical, and does it not demonstrate the Maker of it to be an odd Mortal? We must own that the most zealous of our *Chinese* Pleaders would never have thought on't. So rare an Expedient is what none but a *Norman*, and a Clergyman too, cou'd have invented. The Wife, thou may'st imagine, did not relish this wise Distinction. 'Twas in vain for her to argue with the Parson, that while he was at Law with her Husband, she and her Children were equal Sufferers. The crafty Divine kept close still to his first Excuse. He lov'd his Sister dearly: He should be sorry to have the least Quarrel with her, he only meant to sue her Husband. At length the Woman was quite out of Temper. *If this be Case*, said she to the Curate, *since you are for using us so ill, get out of my House; 'tis not fit that you shou'd go all the Ways in the World to ruin me.*

The Parson was a little startled at this Compliment, for he did not expect it; and it vex'd him the more to be turn'd out of Doors by his Sister, because he had no Money in his Pocket, and at that time did not know whither to go for a Lodging.

Any Priest but a *Norman* would have thought he had nothing more to do than to return to his Parsonage, to pray to God, and to live by the daily Profits of his Church; but this did not suit our Pleader's Taste, who got out of the Scrape by the most comical Expedient in the World. He took shelter

ſhelter in a Publick-Houſe, where he had ſcarce lodg'd two Days, but he got the Oſtler to lend him ten Piſtoles, which was what the poor Wretch had ſav'd out of three or four Years Wages. When the Parſon had finger'd theſe Piſtoles, he fee'd, his Attornies and Council, and the Book-ſeller was arreſted and ſued; and what will ſurprize thee more, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is, that he loſt his Cauſe in the firſt Court of Juſtice; he might have talk'd of the Merits of his Cauſe, and of the Injuſtice that was done him till *Doomſday*, he had no other Remedy to guard himſelf againſt the Curate's Proſecution, but to appeal to the Chief Tribunal of the Province. His Affair is not determin'd to this very Hour, nor can I be certain what will be the Iſſue of ſo ſtrange a Proſecution. 'Tis probable however, as I have been told that the Curate will be ſent back to his Parſonage without any Money. The Man that I think moſt to be pity'd in this whole Affair is the poor Oſtler, who, 'tis to be fear'd, will never ſee his Money again. The Curate's coming to the Inn where he happen'd to be a Domeſtick is one of the Strokes of Fate which fully proves Predeſtination. And how cou'd the unhappy Man foreſee that he took ſo much Pains to be the Bubble of a litigious Cormorant?

This Story, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, may give thee an Idea of the *Normans*. Till I came into their Country, I fancy'd it was impoſſible to find People ſo fond of Law as the *Chineſe*, or that went to Law upon ſuch Trifles; but now I am quite undeceiv'd, and I plainly ſee, that be a Nation ever ſo vicious, one need not deſpair of finding another as bad. I have ſeen no Fault in the *Aſiaticks* which

I have

I have not discover'd among some of the *Europeans*, nor do I perceive any Virtue in *Europe*, but what is known in *Asia*. Men, dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, differ vastly in their Garb, Language, and external Behaviour, but resemble one another prodigiously in their darling Passions. If one knew the Inside of Men as we do their Outside, we should discover that all the People in the Universe form'd but one Nation. *Farewel.*

LETTER XXXV.

From TIAO *at* Moscow *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

THE *Muscovites*, notwithstanding the Care that has been taken for many Years past to cultivate their Genius, are, in my Opinion, the most unpolite, and lumpish People in the World; and it will require a good deal of Time yet to eradicate all their old Customs and to enlighten their Understanding. I compare the *Muscovites* to those dry uncultivated Lands abandon'd for many Ages, and over-run with Weeds that can't be grubb'd up without much Toil; and even when this is done, it will take up many Years before they will produce a plentiful Crop. A Nation

tion does not rise all at once from the grossest State of Ignorance and the most savage Barbarity to the *European* Politeness, and between two Extremes so opposite there must be a Medium. Such a Medium is the State which the *Muscovites* are in at present. They are very different from what they were heretofore, but are still very far from being like the *Germans* their Neighbours.

The *Muscovites* were always exceedingly vain, and by consequence Self-lovers, which two Faults ever accompany one another. As ignorant as they were 50 Years ago, yet they were continually comparing themselves to the ancient *Grecians*; and now that their Knowledge is increased, their Pride is increased in Proportion, and they are, in their own Opinion, the most perfect Nation in the Universe. Whereas the Arts and Sciencies which they have learnt, and are every Day learning from Foreigners, ought to convince them, that they have scarce attain'd to the first Degree of human Knowledge; yet they imagine they are arrived to Perfection, tho' true it is, that the good Luck they have had on some Occasions contributes to augment that good Opinion which they have of themselves.

Notwithstanding the Progress which the Sciences have made for 25 Years past in *Muscovy*, yet if all the Foreigners in the Country were to quit it, I'll engage that in less than 15 Years, the Country would relapse into its former State. The Ministers at the Helm know this full well, and therefore they favour Foreigners, especially the *Germans*, all they can. The common People on the contrary can't endure them, whether 'tis because they have not yet left off that old barbarous Custom of despising

ſpiſing other Nations, or becauſe it wounds their Vanity to ſee Foreigners employ'd in the principal Offices of the State, and in the chief military Employments. The Decencies of Hoſpitality ſeem to be the laſt Virtues which the *Muſcovite* Vulgar are like to be acquainted with, and it will require yet a great many Years to inſpire them with a Love of one of the moſt eſſential Articles of the Law of Nature.

Such is the Pride of the *Muſcovites*, that they can't bear to hear what the *European* Hiſtorians relate of their Sovereigns. Thoſe Authors will have it, that in the Year 955 the *Ruſſians* were all, to a Man, Idolaters; the *Auſtrians* on the contrary pretend that they have received Chriſtianity from its firſt Eſtabliſhment; but what proves their Annals to be falſe is, that they don't tally with one another. Thoſe of *Moſcow* ſay, that one *Andrew* having embark'd at a Port in *Greece*, paſs'd the *Euxine* Sea, and landing at a Place where the *Boryſthenes* falls into the Ocean, travell'd to *Kiow*, which was then the moſt trading Town in all *Ruſſia*. As ſoon as he was come thither, he inſtructed the Inhabitants, and perſuaded them to embrace Chriſtianity. He went from thence to the Principality of *Novogrod*, which was at that time ſeparate by its Government from the *Muſcovite* Empire. He found the Inhabitants of the Latter as gentle as thoſe of the Former, and having poſſeſs'd them with his Sentiments on the Head of Religion, he embark'd again and went to *Rome*, where he met with a People not ſo wiſe nor tractable as the *Muſcovites*. He had little Cauſe to like his Journey, therefore he left that City and went to Peloponneſſus; but it far'd much

worſe

worſe with him here than in *Italy*, for he was crucify'd.

All this Hiſtory is flatly contradicted by the Annals of *Novogrod*, which make no more mention of this *Andrew* than they do of the Emperor *Cunſicu*, who liv'd and reign'd at *China* about 9800 Years ago. What the others ſay of *Andrew* they attribute to one *Anthony*. 'Tis true that they alſo bring this *Anthony* from the *Levant* Sea; but the Veſſel they put him on board is ſomewhat extraordinary: inſtead of a Ship they make him ſail upon a huge Mill-ſtone; this was the Ship on which *Anthony* croſſed the Waves, which was thought ſo extraordinary by the Inhabitants of *Novogrod*, that they did not ſcruple to follow the Advice of a Man who came to them in ſo ſurpriſing a Manner. The *Muſcovite* Monks, who are as great Knaves and as greedy of Money as the *Bonzes*, ſet up a prodigious Mill-ſtone one or two Centuries ago in one of their Convents at *Novogrod*, which they ſay was the ſame that was ſo ſerviceable to this *Anthony*; a Perſonage altogether imaginary, for this ſecond Story is as falſe as the firſt.

'Tis certain, and all good *European* Authors agree in it, that from the time of *Rurik*, who reigned in the Year 760 of the Chriſtians, all *Muſcovy* was idolatrous, and embraced a Religion more ſenſeleſs than that of the Sect of *Foe*. Where were *Andrew*, *Anthony* and the Mill-ſtone then? After the Death of *Rurick*, his Son *Igor*, who ſucceeded him, married a Woman whoſe Name was *Ola*, a Native of *Pleſkow*, and by her he had a Son, named *Stoſlaus*, to whom he left the Empire at his Death; but the Son being very

young, the Princess *Ola* had the Regency during the Minority, and went about the Year 955 to *Constantinople*, where having embraced Christianiy, she returned afterwards to her Dominions, and endeavoured to establish it there; but her Success in this Project was very indifferent, for almost all the *Muscovites* retained their ancient Credenda, and her own Son *Stoslaus* lived and died in Idolatry. 'Twas not till after his Death that *Wolodimir* was solicited by the Embassadors of several Christian Princes, and particularly by those of the Emperor of *Constantinople*, and being prevailed on by their Arguments to turn Christian, many of his Subjects followed his Example.

Wolodimir was not ignorant that among the Christians there were several different Sects, and he was willing to know all before he determined in favour of any. He made himself acquainted with their several Opinions, and declared himself at last in favour of the *Greek* Religion. He sent Ambassadors to *Constantinople*, to the two Emperors *Basil* and *Constantine*, to declare to them that he was resolved to embrace their Religion, on Condition they would give him their Sister in Marriage, and conclude a Treaty of Alliance with him, offensive and defensive. The *Greek* Princes accepted of the Offer, and *Wolodimir* went to *Constantinople*, where he took to him a Wife and a Religion, and was afterwards named *Basil*.

That's the true Epocha when the *Muscovites* began to see the Error of the ridiculous Worship of Idols, tho' it was an Epocha much rather owing to Politicks, than to any true Taste *Wolodimir* had for Christianity. That Prince, whose Mother was Daughter of a Citizen of *Novogrod*, had

had two other Brothers, who disputed with him for the Empire; but by good Luck he intirely defeated and got rid of them, tho' being still afraid of some fresh Commotion, he thought fit to secure himself of powerful Succours by the Alliance of the *Greek* Emperors. That it was which determined him to embrace Christianity, and to choose the *Greek* Sect with a Preference to all the others, because it was a Sect of the greatest Use to him. Were we to examine nicely, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, into the Matter, I am very sure we should find that no Prince changes his Religion, but Politicks are, if not altogether, yet in some Measure the Motive.

As Politicks have a very great Influence upon private Men, as well as Princes, in the Change of their Religion, *Wolodimir*'s Subjects, in order to please him, followed his Example, and presently the whole Court became Christian. The *Muscovite* Priests, who are great Miracle-mongers, ascribe the total Change which was made under that Prince to nothing less than a Miracle. They say, that after he had subdued all the Provinces of the Empire by his Arms, he assembled the most considerable of the Inhabitants, and in their Presence threw a Book into the Fire, which they snatch'd out of the Flames without its receiving any Damage. This amazed them so much, that they quitted all their ancient Opinions, and broke their Idols in Pieces.

The *European* Authors, especially the *French*, *German*, *Spanish* and *Italian*, make a Jest of this pretended Miracle. They say there could be no such thing, because the *Muscovites* only abandon'd one Error to embrace another; and that 'tis im-

poſſible the Deity ſhould work a Miracle to authoriſe a falſe Doctrine. If one may believe half of the *Europeans*, the *Muſcovites* are never the better for breaking their Idols, and they are equally puniſh'd and tormented everlaſtingly after Death; for, according to them, Hereticks are damned as well as Idolaters and Atheiſts, therefore they muſt be equally criminal; and an *Italian*, or a *Frenchman* will tell you, that the *Ruſſians* might as well ſacrifice ſtill to their Gods *Piouruni*, *Mocoſſi*, *Chorſi* and *Stribi* *, as to be ſubject to the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople*, and to follow his erroneous Opinions.

Since the Chriſtians damn one another ſo plentifully to everlaſting Puniſhment for any trifling Diſputes they have about the Preference due to their Paſtors, or the manner of kneading the Bread which is uſed in their Ceremonies (for theſe are the chief Points about which the *Greeks* and *Romans* are divided) ought we to think it extraordinary that they ſo freely plunge into Hell the beſt Men that have lived for ſo many Ages in *China*, and that they give no better Treatment to *Confucius*, a Man born for the Inſtruction and Happineſs of the human Race?

As the *Europeans* who adhere to the *Romiſh* Faith deſpiſe the *Muſcovite* Doctors and Prieſts, the latter have as hearty a Contempt for them. 'Tis true the Caſe is not equally the ſame between them; for among the *Romans* there are Scholars of great Eminence, who have employed all the Learning and Eloquence poſſible to defend their Opinions.

* Theſe are the Names of the old *Muſcovite* Idols.

On

On the contrary, the *Muſcovite* Divines have but juſt learned to read ſince they were forced to it by the laſt Emperor; and it was looked upon as an extraordinary thing to preach in the *Muſcovite* Language at *Petersbourg*, after that Prince had new-modell'd his Empire. Before him the Prieſts and Doctors of the Church never made any publick Diſcourſe; nor did they ſo much as explain the fundamental Books of their Religion, but only read them. They ſaid that all theſe eloquent Inſtructions and ſtudied Harangues were good for nothing, and only ſerved to multiply Errors. This ſpecious Pretence made them ſtagnated as it were in their Ignorance, and gave a Sanction to their Averſion to the Sciences.

Thou do'ſt not want to be told, dear *Ym-Che-Chan*, that theſe ignorant Prieſts did not attain to Learning, becauſe their Prince was in love with it; and tho' they had a mind to comply with his Intentions, and to enter into his Views, it muſt have required a great many Years to get Learning. The mere Deſire of Learning is not ſufficient to obtain it, and after a certain Age, 'tis ſeldom acquired, even by Study. The Underſtanding being render'd dull by a long Courſe of Years paſt in Ignorance, can never riſe to a certain Pitch. Thoſe ignorant Prieſts who lived fifteen Years ago, knowing nothing themſelves, could not inſtruct their Succeſſors. 'Tis true that ſome of the Youth have improved themſelves by foreign Helps, but of theſe there are few; and the Ignorance of the *Muſcovite* Prieſts in general may be compared to that of the *Bonzes* and the *Lamas*, and, like the latter, they are too

fond of their old Cuſtoms, and obſtinately attach'd to their Prejudices.

Tho' the late Czar could not render the Prieſts of his Government more learned, he did at leaſt make them poorer. He abridg'd thoſe Monks and Churches, that were but too rich, of Part of their Revenues, and united them to the Domains of the State. Perhaps he thought that the ſureſt Way to inſpire the Clergy with a Taſte for Study, was to deprive them of the Means of living voluptuouſly, and that he impoveriſh'd them purely to do them Service. If ſuch was his real Deſign, I fancy that the *European* Prieſts elſewhere would not like to be ſerved in that Manner to encourage them to cultivate the Sciences; tho', after all, perhaps it would be the moſt uſeful and moſt effectual Method.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN, *Farewel.*

LETTER XXXVI.

From SIOEU TCHEOU *at* Paris *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

I Have not forgot that I promiſed to acquaint thee of the Fate of ſome of the moſt famous *French* Philoſophers. I will now be as good as my Word, and thou wilt then ſee how far great Men are from finding thoſe Reſourſes and receiving

ing those Honours here which they have at *Pekin*. What Respect have we not for the Memory of *Confucius?* Tho' he has been so many Ages *inter mortuos*, his Glory has suffered no Diminution; the whole Empire, even at this Day reverence him as much as when he was living. He had then, tho' he was not a King, as much Power as a Sovereign; and tho' he did not govern *China* by the Scepter, he conducted and regulated it by his Laws and Counsel; by his Instruction of Princes he made the People happy, and by rendering the Subjects virtuous he establish'd the Throne of the Kings.

The Obligation which the *Chinese* have to this great Man, and the Respect which the Emperors pay to his Memory, have entailed hereditary Nobility on his Family for ever, a Privilege which no other enjoys; nor is the Gratitude of the Nation and its Sovereigns confined to these Marks of Respect and Esteem; for they have erected a stately Tomb for this Philosopher on the Banks of the River *Su* in the very Place where he assembled his Disciples, and where he instructed them. It was but just, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that this Place, so venerable for the useful Conferences that have been held there should be consecrated to Perpetuity by the Ashes of that Philosopher. I will say no more of the Honours which are paid in *China* to true Merit. What I have now put thee in mind of, and what thou seest practised every Day with regard to all Men of Learning, be they of what Sect soever, will be sufficient to convince thee of the wide Difference there is betwixt the Fate of learned Men in *France* and those of *China*.

I dare say, that in this Country, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, there have been Philosophers little inferior to *Confucius*, and the Number of these great Men is also very considerable; but I will only mention the chief of them, and particularly those of them whose Works thou hast read, as they were lent to thee by our Friends the Missionaries and our *Nantes* Merchant. The first that I will take Notice of, shall be *Charon*. This Man, whose Behaviour was always irreproachable, whose Genius had been the Delight of all the truly learned, was cruelly defamed after his Death, when they would fain have hinder'd one of his Friends from printing an excellent Work of his, which he had desired him to publish. For this Purpose they made use of the Authority of the * Head of the first College in the Kingdom, and of many other Doctors; and even the † Magistrates were dragg'd into the Affair. In fine, after a great deal of Trouble and Care, *Charon*'s Friend got it printed; but then it was to be examined by a President whose Name was *Jeannin*. This Man caused several Parts of it to be suppress'd, which were afterwards reprinted in *Holland*; and that the Publick might have a compleat Copy of *Charon*'s excellent *Treatise of Wisdom*, there was a Necessity for the Errors of the *French* to be corrected by their Neighbours.

Michael de Montaigne, whose Essays thou hast read with so much Pleasure, is daily reviled by a superstitious Pack of Monks, Priests and Block-

* The Rector of the University of *Paris*.

† The Attorney-General of the Parliament of *Paris*.

heads:

heads: So far from erecting a Mauſoleum to this great Man, they ſuffer his Works to be run down in twenty ſorry Books, his Perſon to be affronted, and his Memory to be attack'd. If any Man of Letters in *China* was ſo baſe as to calumniate the Perſon of a dead Author, who cannot defend himſelf, and of an Author eſpecially whoſe Merit was an Honour to his Country, they would cauſe his Hand to be cut off; a juſt Puniſhment for a Crime which can't be ſufficiently aboliſh'd! I will forgive a Writer for criticiſing the Opinions of a Philoſopher who is defunct; but to diſturb his Aſhes, to diſhonour his Memory by Lyes, this is a Fury we leave to the *Europeans* alone; we ſhall always hate it.

Gaſſendi fared no better than *Charon*, and *Montaigne*; he was perſecuted while living, and after his Death he met with the ſame Fate. *Deſcartes* was forced to live and die out of his own Country.

All theſe Philoſophers, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, and many others, who have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their Works, never received any Mark of Diſtinction from their own Nation; tho' if any Statue had been erected, or ſtately Tombs built for them, it might be ſaid that the *French* in general were not tainted with the barbarous Frenzy of thoſe who have perſecuted them; but 'tis ſcarce known where they were buried, and it would have been quite forgot, if ſome of their Friends in writing their Lives had not tranſmitted the Rembrance of it to Poſterity.

What a Scandal to *France*, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is ſuch Behaviour? What a Surprize to a *Chineſe* who comes into this Country? Upon this

Subject I must tell thee what happen'd to me a few Days after I came to *Paris*. I went into a Church * built upon one of the Quays of the River, where I saw a stately Tomb. I was as yet unacquainted with the Customs of the *French*; I only knew them superficially, by the Report of the Missionaries, and by the Books which we had read, two things which are generally very deceitful and very liable to Caution. I thought at first Sight that this was *Descartes*'s Tomb, and I must own that I had not the least Suspicion of the contrary. In the Conversation which I had at *Pekin* with the *Europeans*, I was used to look upon this Philosopher as the *Confucius* of the *French*: *Was this*, I said to one that was with me, *the Dress they wore in the Time of* Descartes? *What Name is it you give it*, said my Friend, with an Air of Surprize? "This which you take to be the Statue of "*Descartes*, is the Statue of an *Italian* Cardinal, "whose Avarice and Ambition had well nigh "ruined the Kingdom several times. Think you "that this *Descartes* of whom you speak has a "Tomb like that, the least Part of which cost "more in the Construction than it has done to "bury all the learned Men in the World since "it began? That Philosopher has no other Mark "of Distinction but an Inscription against the "Wall of a Church; and a Cobler that founds "an annual Service for fifteen Crowns is as ho-"nourably treated." *But if what you tell me be true*, said I, *why don't they dash the Statue of this Cardinal in Pieces? How comes it to pass, that the Ashes of a Man whom the Kingdom is so much*

* The Church of *Mazarine* College.

bound

bound to curse, are honoured, while the Relicks of so many great Genius's as have been an Ornament to it are suffer'd to rot in the most despicable Oblivion?

" Those great Geniuses *reply'd my Companion*, " were Persons who left no powerful Heirs behind " them that were able to defend their Memories; " nor have they any Monuments but in the " Hearts of Gentlemen who have a real Love " for the Sciences; whereas the Cardinal having " enrich'd his Family by his Robberies, and ad- " vanced it to the highest Rank, they support by " their own Credit the Glory of the Man to " whom they are so highly obliged. So far from " a Thought of destroying the Tomb which offends " you, there are People paid for performing an " annual Service in this Church to his Honour " every Year. What, *said I*, you are not con- " tent to honour the Wicked by grand Structures, " but you suffer the Remembrance of them to " be kept up every Year, and you permit a Man " to be extoll'd, whose Memory ought to be " held in Execration! I don't wonder if Persons " of Wealth and Power should not be very " studious to acquire the publick Esteem, because " they are sure that Posterity will pay them the " same Honours as are paid to Persons who have " discharged their Offices worthily. Tell me, " *said I*, what Honours you mean to pay to that " wise Cardinal who is your first Minister at this " time? Except deifying him, you can do no- " thing more for him than your Ancestors have " done for this Cardinal, and what you even per- " mit to be done to him at this Day; yet one " has done as much Good to *France*, as the " other did Harm.

All the Distinction, *reply'd my Companion*, that there will be between these two Ministers, when the latter is dead, is perhaps that the virtuous one will have a Tomb answerable to his manner of thinking; it will be plain, modest, and put those who see it in mind of the Candour, Probity and Disinterestedness of the Person whom it incloses. " That is as much as to say, *reply'd* " *I*, that if Respect and Veneration don't ope- " rate upon the Family of the living Cardinal, " as Vanity and Ostentation did upon that of " the dead one, he will perhaps be interred as " plainly as you say *Descartes* was, without any " Forwardness on the Part of the State to testify " its Acknowledgment, by supplying what the " Modesty of the Cardinal's Heirs might hinder " them from doing. O the Wisdom of that " Nation, where the greatest Philosopher, and " the most illustrious Minister easily obtain a " Grave of six Foot long to be interred in! " What a senseless People are we *Chinese*, who " must to be sure think very differently from the " *French*, since every Year has augmented the " Edifices we have built near the Tomb of " *Confucius*, so that the said Tomb is now as " big as a Town.

The *Frenchman* with whom I talk'd, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, was sensible of the whole Force of my Irony. *What d'ye mean*, said he? *'Tis a Misfortune to our Nation to declare so little Respect for, and Attachment to, the Memory of the great Men whom it produces. The Example of our Neighbours ought to be a Lesson to us, to reform so scandalous an Omission.* He was much in the right. The *Dutch* have erected a Statue in Brass to *Erasmus*

Eraſmus *, in the Middle of one of their fineſt Towns. They have lately given the moſt authentick and moſt publick Tokens of their Regret for the Loſs of *Boerhaave*. The *Engliſh* are ſtill more careful to honour the Memory of their great Men; they erect Mauſoleums for them near thoſe of their Kings; nay, if Perſons of real Merit, though they are Foreigners, happen to die in their Country, they give eſſential Marks of their Reſpect to it. They can't endure that the Aſhes of a Philoſopher, of a wiſe Man who ought to be conſidered by Mankind as one of thoſe Preceptors which Heaven raiſes up every now and then to inſtruct them, ſhould be mix'd with thoſe of other Men. *St. Evremont*, who like almoſt all the *French* Philoſophers, was perſecuted and obliged to leave the Kingdom, ſtaid for a while in *Holland*, but ſettled at laſt in *England*, where after many Years he finiſh'd his long Courſe, being 90 Years of Age, 5 Months and 20 Days, when he died; retaining that lively Imagination and ſolid Judgment which had acquired him the Eſteem of all *Europe*, to the laſt Moment of his Life. He order'd by his Will that he ſhould be interr'd without Pomp. The *Engliſh* did not care to diſobey his Orders, nor, on the other Hand, could they bear that a Man ſo worthy of the greateſt Honours ſhould be deprived of 'em on Account of his Modeſty. Tho' he was not of the Religion of the Government †,

* *Rotterdam.*

† You aſk me, Sir, what was his Religion? I muſt tell you that he always profeſſed the *Romiſh* Religion, in which he was born.

Des Maizeaux, in his *Life of St.* Evremont, and

and tho' he was a Foreigner, they chose to bury him in a Temple famous for the Mausoleums of the Kings of *England*, and for those of such illustrious Personages *, whose Knowledge, and the Services they have done to the Publick have procur'd them a Place there.

I can't think on't without Horror, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, when I consider that if *Locke*, that *English* Philosopher, whose Works thou hast read with so much Admiration, had died at *Paris*, he would not only have not had a Place in a distinguish'd Tomb, but would have been denied Burial, and that because he was not of the Religion which was uppermost; he would have been interr'd in some Field. The most savage Nations respect the Memory of great Men; nothing excuses them from treating them with Marks of Honour; and with the *Parisians*, Religion serves as a Pretext to authorise the blackest Crimes and the most barbarous Customs. Oh! did we but know the *French* in *China* as well as I begin to know them, we should abate very much of our Esteem for them, and should think ourselves far better Men.

Farewel, and let me hear from thee.

* There are the Tombs of the *Casaubons*, *Camden*, *Barrow*, *Chaucer*, *Spencer*, *Cowley*, *Newton*, *Milton*, &c. who would all have been interr'd at *Paris* in a Laystall, as *Moliere*, the greatest Poet that *France* ever had in the Comic Strain, had like to have been.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVII.

From TIAO *at* Moſcow *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

MOSCOW is a large City, but 'tis dirty, ill built, and has nothing worthy of a Traveller's Curioſity; and its Inhabitants ſtill retain very much of their Anceſtor's Clowniſhneſs. As the Court is kept at *Petersbourg*, they have not had the Opportunity of improving by the Examples which they would have ſeen every Day in civiliz'd Courtiers, and the Foreigners that are always in the Retinue of the Sovereign, whoſe Number is very conſiderable.

The Inhabitants of *Moſcow* don't yet reliſh the Loſs of their Beards, which they were obliged to cut off by an Order of the laſt Emperor, when the ſame had like to have cauſed a general Rebellion; ſo that the Prince was under a Neceſſity of employing all his Power to ſuppreſs a dangerous Inſurrection; for it was Death to the *Muſcovites* to have their Chins laid bare, and they thought it a ſhocking Demand to require them to change their old Cuſtoms. How uſeful ſoever thoſe Innovations were which the Czar introduced, they created

Numbers

Numbers of Malecontents, so that he was obliged to exert his despotic Power in its fullest Extent to get them Admission. He had to do with a rough untractable People, a People that had little if any Sense of Honour and Glory, that were inured to the severest Chastisements, prepossess'd in favour of their own Vices, and that thought their Ignorance perfect Wisdom; and if they were not treated at this very Day with the same Severity as ever, the old Customs would soon get the better of the new ones, and long Beards would again be the Fashion.

I can't comprehehend, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, how a People that are not intirely void of Sense can be so uneasy about Dress, and whether they suffered their Hair and Beards to grow, or to be shaved. I will forgive the *Muscovites* for preferring Death to the Custom of having a smooth Chin, Ignorance and Stupidity being the essential Causes of Obstinacy; but that a People so knowing, so polite, so civilized as the *Chinese*, should do the same thing, and fall into the same Errors as Nations that are in a manner barbarous, 'tis what I can't conceive. Yet our Forefathers, at the time that *China* was conquer'd by the *Tartars*, were as uneasy for the Loss of their Hair, as the *Muscovites* for the Loss of their Beards. They could not bear the Thoughts of being obliged to shave their Heads like the *Tartars*; therefore they resisted for a good while, and when they saw they must submit to the Razor or die, several preferr'd the latter rather than part with their long Hair. What Folly is here, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*! and what a Mark of the Force of Prejudice! Be the Difference between the Nations what it will, in respect of Genius,

nius, the *Muſcovites* died for their Beards, and the *Chineſe* for the Hair of their Heads. Who knows but there have been People heretofore that rebelled for keeping up the Privilege of wearing long Nails, and others for paring them to the Quick. I will add one thing here, which is ſtill a ſtronger Demonſtration of the Caprice of the human Race; *viz.* that the ſame People who rebelled and ſuffered Death upon the Suppreſſion of certain Cuſtoms, equally indifferent, obeyed the ſevereſt Orders with Submiſſion, paid exceſſive Taxes without murmuring, and ſubmitted their Eſtates, their Liberty and their Families to their Sovereign without Reluctance; but all this Loyalty, and all this Conſtancy vaniſh'd upon the Thoughts of clipping off a few Hairs, as uſeleſs and as inſignificant to the Health and Benefit of the Body, as the other Excrements which it is impower'd by Nature to evacuate.

To return to the *Muſcovites*: Heretofore the Patriarch who reſided at *Moſcow* was the Head of their Religion. He was anciently appointed by the Patriarchs of *Conſtantinople*, and elected afterwards by ſome Eccleſiaſticks that were choſe by the Czar. This Patriarch had great Authority; he determined all Matters ſovereignly which related to Religion, and the Prince himſelf too conſulted him on certain Affairs. His Dreſs was a long black Robe, and whether he went on Foot, or on Horſeback, or in a Coach, his Paſtoral Staff was always carried before him. The People flock'd from all Parts to receive his Benediction, which he gave them by ſpreading two of his Fingers and laying his Thumb upon the two others that were bent. This Benediction did not pleaſe the late Czar;

Czar; he thought the Credit of the Patriarch dangerous in a State whose ancient Customs he meant to change intirely. Besides, he comprehended the Clergy in the States that he intended to reform; therefore he abolish'd the Dignity of the Patriarch, and made his Subjects submit again to the Patriarch of *Constantinople*. This render'd him Master of the Clergy even more than he was before; for the Authority of the Patriarch of *Constantinople* is but a Phantom, which subsists no otherwise than as it pleases the Prince, and vanishes when he thinks fit.

There are also several other particular Pontiffs in *Muscovy*. The chief who are called *Metropolitan*, are those of *Novogrod*, *Rostow*, *Casani* and *Sarskeinsi*, who have several other Pontiffs under them, with the Title of Arch-bishop. Of these there are seven, *viz.* the Arch-bishops of *Kiow*, *Moscow*, *Wolodimir*, *Tobolske* in *Siberia*, the Arch-bishop the Kingdom of *Casan*, and that of *Astracan*. A vast Number of the Clergy, Priests and Fryars are dependent on these Pontiffs; so many, that in the City of *Moscow* alone 'tis affirm'd, that, not to mention the Monks, they reckon'd 4000 Popes, which is the Name that the *Muscovites* give to their Ecclesiasticks.

The Popes are chiefly distinguish'd from the Laity by a little Cap call'd Shuffia, which the Pontiff puts on their Heads upon the Day of their Admission; and in this Cap resides all their Authority and all their Merit. When they go to thresh a Pope, they cunningly take off his Shuffia, for if any Blow of the Cudgel should light upon it, or if they throw it upon the Ground, severe would be the Punishment. 'Tis very common to see the Ecclesiasticks fight at *Moscow*, where they often

go

go to the publick Houſes and get themſelves drunk with Beer, Mead, and Brandy; but woe be to them when they are drunk and inſult any one, if they don't take care of their Cap.

The ſame Mechanic at *Moſcow* that happens to meet a Pope in the Streets, whoſe Brains he had almoſt beat out but the Night before at a Tavern, humbly aſks his Bleſſing, and the Pope gravely confers it upon him, by making a Croſs on the Forehead and Breaſt, after which he gives him a Kiſs. I can't help thinking, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, that there's a good deal of Reſemblance betwixt a *Muſcovite* threſſing and worſhipping one and the ſame Pope by Turns, and a *Chineſe* offering Preſents to his Idol one Day, and whipping it the next, beſides giving it the moſt abuſive Language. Man, when abandoned to his Prejudices, is every where the ſame, and his Follies are of much the ſame Nature, tho' they appear under a different Form; the one Man cudgels the Prieſt, whom he reveres; the other ſcourges the Idol which he worſhips. What an odd Jumble is here of Religion and Revenge, Superſtition and Impiety!

The Pontiffs and the Popes, beſides the Tenths and other Revenues which they enjoy, have the Advantage of ſelling all Offices, Dignities and Favours depending on them. This is forbidden them by their Religion, but they don't much mind that; and the Eccleſiaſtical Traffick is as publick at *Moſcow* as the buying and ſelling of Goods; the Biſhop ſells to the Prieſts, and the Prieſts to all that will lay out Money with them.

All the Temples of the *Muſcovites* are of a round Form, and arch'd over, to denote as they ſay the Almighty Power of the great God who created the Heavens.

Heavens. This Sentiment comes very near to the Opinion of thoſe learned Men who own the *Tien* for the Sovereign Lord of the Sky, and who would undoubtedly approve of the Form which the *Muſcovites* give to their Temples; but one thing wherein they would not agree, would be in the great Virtue which the *Muſcovites* aſcribe to Bells, with which they have taken care to furniſh their Temples in abundance. I can't imagine for what Reaſon it is that they think the Noiſe which is made by two Pieces of Braſs ſtriking one againſt another, ſo precious and ſalutary; for they abſolutely condemn all Sorts of Muſick, when it is employ'd in Divine Service. They muſt needs judge of the cœleſtial Faculties by the Dulneſs of their own; and this undoubtedly induces them to believe that a frightful Noiſe of Bells, enough to ſtun any Body but themſelves, is preferable to the harmonious Sound of an Organ.

The *Muſcovites* have ſeveral other Opinions altogether as ſtrange. They don't admit of Figures in Relievo in their Temples; but they have a great Number of Pictures, and an Image is more or leſs in their Eſteem according to its Thickneſs. What Folly, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, what Impertinence is this! Either the Repreſentations of human Figures are lawful in the Temples, or they are contrary to the Reſpect which is due to the Divine Being. If they are lawful, what ſignifies the ridiculous Diſtinction of a Statue and a Painting? And if they are not lawful, to what Purpoſe is it again?

What follows, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is another Cuſtom of the *Muſcovites*, not leſs abſurd than the former. When a married Couple have perform'd the Duties of Marriage, they can't enter into their

Temples

Temples till they have been waſh'd in their Bagnio. But alas! has the Performance of one of the moſt ſacred and venerable Functions of Nature, a Function on which depends the Preſervation of the human Species, a Function which renders Men truly happy, which unites and maintains the Bands of Society; what, I ſay, has the Performance of this Duty any thing in it, either contrary to the Reſpect which is owing to the Deity, or unworthy of thoſe who profeſs to worſhip him? Is it upon account of any corporal Filth which may be contracted in the Diſcharge of this Duty? But if this were the Caſe, it would be much more neceſſary to baniſh thoſe from Church who, during the Courſe of the Day, have ſubmitted to the Neceſſities of Nature, and have evacuated the Aliments they have been nouriſh'd with by the inferior Parts. Since the *Muſcovites* have taken the Cuſtom of their Purification after the Duties of Marriage from the Muſſulmen, they ought likewiſe to imitate them in thoſe which they practiſe after certain natural Functions.

I can't help ſmiling at the Credulity of Mankind, when I conſider, Dear *Ni-Che-Chan*, in what three-fourths of them make an eſſential Part of that Worſhip which they pay the Divinity to conſiſt; ſome think they honour him by waſhing their Poſteriors with great Care, others by bathing themſelves in Bagnio's, ſome by tearing their Fleſh to Pieces, others by not eating; ſome by making ridiculous Figures and Contorſions; many by abſtaining from Women, that is to ſay, by becoming uſeleſs to Society, and by tormenting themſelves all their Life-time to perpetuate the wicked and dangerous Example which they give; ſeveral

by

by killing, maſſacreing and cutting Mens Throats, to bring them to the true Faith; and others, in fine, by ſtaining the Altars of the Supreme God with human Gore, and making Nature ſhudder for the Sake of doing Honour to its Author.

What a vaſt Field for Reflection, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, is the Folly, Fury and Rage of Mankind! All their monſtrous Paſſions are guided by the falſe Notion which they have of the Worſhip which ought to be paid to the Deity. Happy are thoſe wiſe Philoſophers who are ſenſible that all theſe external Ceremonies, theſe prepoſterous Mortifications, theſe cruel Perſecutions, theſe barbarous Sacrifices, are Actions which are an Abomination to that Being, ſovereignly great and ſovereignly juſt, who only judges of Men by their Hearts, and not by their Habits.

Farewel, Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,
and let me hear from thee.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

From YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin, *to* CHOANG *at* Ispahan.

Dear CHOANG,

I Agree with thee that the true Disciples of *Confucius* have almost the same Notions of the Deity as the *Persians*; but there's a wide Difference betwixt them as to the Creation of the World, which is what I believe thou hast not sufficiently taken notice of. They both agree that all Beings owe their Origin and Preservation to the good Will and Pleasure of a Being sovereignly good, powerful, intelligent and eternal; but the *Persians* suppose that this Being created every thing that exists out of nothing, that he extracted Matter out of nothing. On the contrary, the *Chinese* Literati can't conceive that Matter was not co-eternal with the Supreme Being; and they say with all the ancient Philosophers, both *Indians*, *Greeks*, and *Ægyptians*, that 'tis impossible it could be taken from nothing, and that by Consequence it must have been co-eternal with God.

Dear *Choang*, I have carefully examined into the Sentiments of the Ancients upon so nice an Affair. I have rumaged over all the Authors of the Library of

of our Friends the Missionaries, and I find that there is but one single Voice among the Ancients for the Eternity of Matter, and that the ancient *Africans* and *Europeans* had the same Opinion as our primitive Ancestors.

The *Ægyptians*, whom the *Greeks* reckon'd their Masters in the Arts and Sciences thought that Matter had existed always. They ascribed the Formation of the first Men, as well as of all other Animals, to the Fertility of the Earth warm'd by the Sun; and they pretended that the human Race commenced in *Ægypt*. See what *Diodorus Siculus* says of this Matter *. The *Ægyptians* arguing, from the Fertility of their Soil, and the Advantages they derive from the Nile, say that this very River produces a great Number of Animals, and all the kinds of Nourishment proper for them, together with the Cane-root, the Lotos, the *Ægyptian* Bean, the Fruit call'd *Corseon*, and several other Plants or Fruits which are proper for Men themselves. They quote in particular the Instance of the Rats, which we have formerly mention'd, and at which they say that all who see them are astonish'd; for sometimes those Animals are perceived as appearing out of the Ground, with one Half of their Bodies already form'd and alive, while the other Half still retains the Nature of the Slime to which it still adheres. 'Tis plain therefore from thence, say they, that as soon as the Elements were laid open, *Ægypt* produced the first Man, because, in short, as the World is now disposed, *Ægypt* is the only Country that breeds

* *Diodor.* Lib. I. cap. v. p. 17. I use the Translation of the Abbé *Terusson*.

Animals.

Animals. " The new Men contemplating the " Form of the Univerſe, and admiring its Order " and Beauty, were ſtruck with a particular Ve- " neration at the Sight of the Sun and Moon, " which Planets they looked upon as the two " principal and eternal Deities.

That, Dear *Choang*, was the Opinion of the *Ægyptians*, i. e. of the firſt People of whom the *Europeans* have any Knowledge. They not only believed Matter to be eternal; but of a Part of that Matter they made their principal Deities. They were very far from thinking that the Univerſe could be form'd by the firſt Being out of nothing, becauſe they granted the Power of forming Men and Animals to Matter.

The *Greeks* were all agreed with the *Ægyptians* in this Article; and, of all their various Sects, not one admitted of the Creation of Matter, or ſuppoſed that it was formed out of nothing.

The *Platonicians* ſuppoſe that God * and Matter were the Principles of all Beings. Matter had been from all Eternity without Form or Shape, and moved without Order; but God gave it a Form and fix'd Rules. *Plato* explains himſelf

* Δύο δε τῶν πάντων ἀπέφηνεν ἀρχάς, Θεὸν καὶ ὕλην, ὃν καὶ νοῦν προσαγορεύει καὶ αἴτιον. Εἶναι δε τὴν ὕλην ἀρχηλάτιτον καὶ ἄπειρον, ἐξῆς γίνεσθαι τα συγκριματα. Ατάκτως δε ποτε αὐτήν κινουμενην, ὑπο τοῦ θεοῦ φησὶν εἰς ἕνα συναχθῆναι τόπον, τάξιν ἀταξίας κρείττονα ἡγησαμένου. Duo omnino eſſe rerum principia, Deum atque materiam, illum, & mentem & cauſam appellat. Eſſe autem materiam informem & infinitam, ex qua concretiones fiant, ea cum aliquando temere & immoderate & inordinate moveretur, adeò ait in locum coactum, quod ordinem temeritati præſtare cenſuerit.

Diogen. Laert. Lib. iii. *in Vit.* Platon. *Segin* 6. 3.

clearly concerning the Eternity of this first Matter, * void of all Form; and concerning the irregular Motions with which it was agitated before the Spirit, i. e. God made use of it in the Formation of the Universe. *Cicero* † has, in one of his Works, given us this Opinion of the *Platonicians* in a very clear manner.

The Stoicks admitted of Matter ‡ as the universal Principle of all Beings. They understood two things by the first Matter, gross Substance, and the Spirit which vivify'd that Substance wherein it was diffused. They ‖ inclosed the Divinity in the Universe as the Soul is in the Body, the one performed the same Functions throughout universal Matter, as the other in one of its Parts;

* Εκ γὰρ τῆς ἑαυτῆς τὸ παραπαν οὐκ ἐξίστασθαι δυνάμεως. Δέκεσθαι γὰρ αει τα πάντα. Καὶ μορφην οὐδεμιαν ποτὲ οὐδενὶ τῶν εἰσιόντων ομοίαν ἔιληφεν οὐδαμὲς οὐδαμῶς.

Plato in Timæo c. 484.

† Sed subjectam putant omnibus sine nulla specie, atque carentem omni illa qualitate materiam quandam, ex qua omnia expressa atque effecta, quæ tota omnia accipere possit, omnibusque modis mutare, atque ex omni parte, eoque interire etiam non in nihilum, sed in suas partes, quæ infinite secari ac dividi possint.

Cicer. *Acad. Quæst.* p. 32 *Edit. Lugd.* 1610.

‡ Ξύσιαν δε φασι τῶν ὀντων απαιντων τὴν πρωὴην ὑλην ὡς κ᾽ Χρυσιππος εν ΤΗ᾽ πρωτΗ των φυσικῶν κ᾽ Ζηνων. Porro rerum omnium substantiam primam materiam dicunt, ut et Crisipius in primo rerum naturalium, et Zeno.

Diog. Laert. Lib. vii. *in Vit.* Zenon. *Segm.* 150.

‖ Deum materiæ conglutinabant Stoici ad eum modum, quo anima hæret corpori. In materia ipsum obire jubebant officium formæ non *assistentis* sed *informantis*, sic enim loquimur in scholis. *Dissert.* xv. *ad Thess.* xii. Stoicus Deus forma mundi informans. *In* Jac. Thomasio *in* p. 177. *Edit. Lipsi.*

therefore,

therefore, according to thoſe Philoſophers, the material Principle muſt neceſſarily have been from all time coeternal with the vivifying Principle.

The *Peripateticks*, who are attach'd to the Doctrine of *Ariſtotle*, ſuppoſed, with their Maſter *, that the World was eternal; and of all the Opinions which that *Greek* Philoſopher maintained, that was the Hypotheſis in which he waver'd leaſt. He admitted Form, Matter, and Privation for the Principle of all Beings; theſe three things had ſubſiſted from all Eternity, and from all time Matter had ſucceſſively changed its Form, and conſequently, by aſſuming a new one, it was deprived of the former.

As to the *Epicureans*, they held that Atoms † had always exiſted; which Opinion *Epicurus* had borrowed from *Democritus*, and *Democritus* from *Leucippus*.

All the ancient Philoſophers, whether they believed that the World was form'd by Chance, or

* Mundum eſſe genitum omnes antiqui philoſophi ante ipſum Ariſtotelem poſuerunt, ut Anaxagoras, Democritus, Empedocles, Meliſſus, Plato cum cæteris; ſed ipſe Ariſtoteles, omnium primus, ingenitum & æternum fecit, ut de ſe ipſemet ait I. *de Cœlo text.* 102-----& qui illum ſequuntur, mundum ingenitum & ab æterno ponunt. *Franciſc. Toleti Societ. Jeſu Comment. in octo Libros* Ariſtotelis *de Phyſica auſcultatione. In Lib.* viii. *Phyſic. Ariſt. cap.* 2. *quæſt.* 1. *fol.* 210. *col.* 1. *Edit. in* 4^to.

† *Principium hinc cujus nobis exordia ſumet,*
Nullam rem è nihilo gigni divinitus unquam.
Lucr. de Rer. Nat. Lib. i.
Tranſlated by Creech.
And now let this, as the firſt Rule be laid,
Nothing was by the Gods of nothing made.

whether they admitted of an intelligent Being which presided at the Regulation of the Universe, have equally admitted of the Eternity of Matter. They always thought it was impossible that a material Substance could be extracted out of nothing, even by Divine Power. The *European* Authors, who are living at this Day, frankly own the Opposition that there is between them and the other Philosophers; but they say that the Devil * deceiv'd those who were not of their Opinion. As for my own part, Dear *Choang*, I think that they themselves have been Dupes to their own Prejudices. Thou knowest that I could never agree with our Friends the Missionaries that Matter was extracted out of nothing; and tho' I was always of their Opinion concerning the Qualities of the Supreme Being, of the first intelligent Principle, sovereignly just and sovereignly powerful, I maintained and do still maintain, that Matter must have been coeternal with him, tho' it was always in Subjection to him.

If the Supreme Being created Matter, whence did he take it? Is it foreign from him? This cannot be, because there can be nothing beyond him, and because he would be no longer infinite,

* *Gentilibus omnibus persuasum fuit cum Deo materiam increatam ab æterno coextitisse. Tetigi hoc in* Sched. hist. § 37. Lit. O. *et duas causas exposui quibus a Satana mendacium hoc persuaderi sibi fuerint passi:* unam *quod ne a Deo quidem crederent ex puro nihilo quicquam fieri posse*; alteram *quod existimarent nisi materia detur quæ sit independens Principium mali, fore ut Deus habeatur autor malorum.* Differt. xii. *Stoicis materia principium mali.* Ad Thes. xii. Jacob Thomas p. 162.

if he was limited by any thing whatsoever. Is it in him? This is likewise impossible: He would be equally finite, the Matter which was in him being under a Necessity of forming a Point there, and every thing in which a Point may be plac'd being measurable. The Missionaries think to evade this Difficulty, by saying that God did not take Matter either within or without him; but that he created it by his Will. There is nothing so easy as to defeat this Objection by the very Principles of those who make use of it; for according to them, to say that God has created Matter by his Will, is to say that he made it himself. They don't distinguish the Attributes in the Divine Being; the Will of God is God himself. If his Attributes were distinct, there would be several Infinites; his Justice, his Mercy, his Power being infinite in the same manner as his Will; whereas there can be but one Infinite, and the Idea of Infinity excludes every Idea of Augmentation. Therefore when the Missionaries say that God made Matter by his Will, they repeat what is but the same thing, tho' in different terms, that God created Matter; but still the Difficulty remains, which is to know from whence he took it, when he created it. There are several others that follow, which are no less considerable.

If the Divine Being created Matter, how is it possible it should be so defective as it is? Can Imperfection flow from a perfect Being? From whence comes moral Evil to be introduced into the World, if it were not from the Defects of Matter? Nothing could not produce it, for nothing can come out of nothing; nor can God be the Author of it, his Nature being intirely

oppoſite to it; yet moral Evil there is, therefore it muſt have derived its Source from defective and even vicious Matter, which has exiſted from all Eternity, and which was always the Source of Evil, as the Spirit and the Supreme Being is of Good.

The Miſſionaries may torment themſelves as much as they will, they muſt own that if Matter did not exiſt coeternally with God, he is the Cauſe of moral and phyſical Evil; and if he is not, he is therefore not the Author of every thing which exiſts; for to anſwer as they do, that evil proceeds from non-entity and nothing, is jeſting with People. If nothing had the Power of creating Beings, its Power would extend as far as God's Power, which is abſurd and ridiculous. What they ſay to get clear of this powerful Objection, is really pitiful. They pretend that Evil is a Privation which partakes of non-entity, as Sickneſs is a Privation of Health; but 'tis evident that moral and phyſical Evil are Beings as poſitive as moral and phyſical Good. What ſhould hinder a Man who is inclined to make an ill uſe of the Obſcurity of Terms, and to have Recourſe to Equivocation, from ſaying that Health is a Privation of Sickneſs, and that conſequently Health is only a Privation which partakes of Non-entity? 'Tis certain that Evil is as poſitive a Being as Good, and that Vices proceed from a real Principle as well as Virtues. A Man who robs his Countryman out of mere Covetouſneſs, does an Act as real and as poſitive as a Man that gives Alms to a poor Body out of Charity. Can any doubt, except they are blind, that the different Acts of the Intention of theſe two Men are Acts as real and as poſitive, the one as the other?

It

If Evil be therefore a positive Being, as it is, it being impossible for God to be the Cause of it, any more than nothing, which in that Case, would have a Power equal with God, and would every Day produce and form by Chance * new Beings which we don't see; Evil must necessarily and consequently have its Source in Matter, defective in its Nature, and yet coeternal with the Divinity.

These, Dear *Choang*, are my Sentiments. I know that thou do'st not approve of them; that thou hast adopted the Opinion of our Friends the Missionaries without Restriction, as to the Creation of the Universe; but perhaps thy Understanding is rather dazzled than truly convinced.

Farewel.

* *Nam si de nihilo fierent, ex omnibus rebus*
Omne genus nasci posset, nil semine egeret.
Lucr. de Rer. Nat. Lib. i.

If nothing can be fertile, what Law binds
All beings still to gen'rate their own Kinds?
Why do not all things variously proceed
From ev'ry thing? What use of similar Seed?
Creech's *Translat.*

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

From TIAO *at* Moſcow, *to* YN-CHE-CHAN *at* Pekin.

Dear YN-CHE-CHAN,

IN my laſt Letter I gave thee ſome Account of the *Muſcovite* Temples; but I did not tell thee, that the Chriſtians who are not of the *Greek* Faith are expreſly forbid to enter them. If any one of them ſhould tranſgreſs that Order, and he ſhould be taken in the Fact, they would ſeverely give him the Diſcipline of the *Knout*, and perhaps he would be condemned for the Remainder of his Life to hunt Sables. 'Tis almoſt as dangerous for a *Roman* or a *Dutchman* to enter into a Church at *Moſcow*, as for a *Jew* to fall into the Hands of an Inquiſitor at *Goa*.

The *Muſcovites* place Dogs and all that are not of their Sect in the ſame Claſs. If a Shock-Dog, or a *Spaniard*, enters into one of their Churches, 'tis alike prophaned; the Filth is the ſame, whether it be cauſed by the ſhagged Beaſt or the Man; for was *Shock* ever ſo dirty, and the *Spaniard*, contrary to the Cuſtom of his Country, ever ſo ſpruce and ſweet-ſcented, the Temple muſt of Neceſſity be conſecrated over again, and all the uſual Ceremonies performed. A *French* Merchant

of

of my Acquaintance, with whom I lodge, told me a very merry Story upon this Head, which I had much ado to believe; but to convince me of it, he ſhewed me the Book where he had read it, and it is as follows.

" * Some Years ago an Ambaſſador from *Eng-*
" *land* went to *Moſcow*, and carried a great
" Monkey with him, whom he put in a Livery,
" like one of his Foot-boys. The Monkey got
" aſtray one Day, and leap'd into a Church,
" which then happened to be open, juſt oppoſite
" to the Ambaſſador's Houſe. The unlucky
" Ape, as thoſe Animals commonly are, did a
" great deal of Miſchief; he ſkipp'd about every
" where, looſened and quite ſpoiled the Pictures
" that hung to the Walls, and committed other
" Ravage. The Church-Warden hearing a ſtrange
" Rattle, ran to the Church, and ſeeing the Ape
" there in the Livery of the *Engliſh* Ambaſſador,
" whom he took for one of his Valets, he ſhut
" up the Church, and went immediately to tell
" the Patriarch what had happened. The Pa-
" triarch, in a great Fret and Fume, went that
" very Inſtant to the Czar's Palace, to inform
" him of ſo foul a Deed, and immediately ſome
" Halbardiers were ſent to ſeize the Miſcreant,
" who had preſumed to prophane the Church,
" thinking the Offender was actually a Valet de
" Chambre. When the Halbardiers enter'd the
" Church, they found the Monkey upon the Altar
" as buſy as could be. They threatned him, and
" charged him to come down, on Pain of being
" well thraſh'd; but as they only talked all the

* Religion of the *Muſcovites*, p. 17.

" while to a Beaſt, they were not obeyed. The " Monkey, on the contrary, as is the Cuſtom of " thoſe Creatures, ſhew'd them his Teeth, which " put one of the Halbardiers into ſuch a Paſſion, " that he ran to the Ape, and gave him ſome " Blows upon the Back with his Half-pike. The " Monkey being ſtrong and ſturdy, was in ſuch " a Rage at this Drubbing, that he flew at the " Halbardier, and maul'd him ſo cruelly, not- " withſtanding the Drubbings that were given him " to make him let go his Hold, that they were " obliged to carry the poor Man home almoſt " dead. Mean time the other Halbardiers had " much ado to maſter the Monkey, nor could they " hold him till they had laid him on his Back by " mere Dint of Blows. Then they bound him, " and in that Manner dragg'd him to Priſon, in " Sight of a vaſt Crowd of People that were got " together. The Ambaſſador at the ſame time " ran the Hazard of being as ill uſed as his Mon- " key, if he had not obtained a Safeguard for " his Quarter, the Mob being incenſed againſt " him from a Notion that he was the Author of " the Sacrilege that had been committed; and " ſome there were that ſuſpected this Miniſter to " have Dealings with evil Spirits, becauſe he car- " ried a Devil about him, that they could not " get a Word out of; and indeed, as he was no " more than a Monkey, how ſhould they? The " principal Officers and Merchants went to Court, " and complained to the Czar, and repreſented " that the Creature which had committed all this " Diſorder in the Church was not a Man, but a " Beaſt, that had been caught wild in the *Eaſt-* " *Indies*, and then tamed; and the Ambaſſador

" offer'd

" offer'd to make double Satisfaction for what " Damage he had done. But this did not bring " off the Monkey; for the Patriarch alledged, " that let the Animal be what it would, Beaſt " or Devil incarnate, he muſt indiſpenſibly be " put to Death, becauſe he had not only pro- " phaned the Church, but made a Racket and a " Diſturbance in a Place that was ſacred. Sen- " tence being paſſed on him accordingly, poor " Pug was drawn through the whole City tied " and bound with Cords; and then, for they " were as much afraid of this Animal as they " were of the Devil, ſome of the ſtouteſt and " moſt courageous of the Halbardiers ſhot him " to Death. After ſo notable an Execution, " publick Outcry was made, that no body ſhould " offer to attack the Perſon of the Ambaſſador on " Pain of Death."

As extraordinary as this Adventure was, don't imagine that 'tis more than an Age ſince it happened: On the contrary, 'tis a modern Story, no longer ago than the Beginning of the Reign of the late Czar. By this we may form a Judgment of the Stupidity and groſs Ignorance of the *Muſcovites* but a few Years ago; and they are much obliged to the late Czar that they are not guilty of ſuch Folly at this Day. A Monkey would not now be miſtaken at *Moſcow* for a Devil; but their Hatred to Foreigners is as great as ever, and not a Year paſſes over their Heads, but they excommunicate ſuch as are not of their Religion. The beſt Jeſt of all is, that on the very ſame Day the *Roman* Pontiff acts the ſame Part at *Rome*, and excommunicates all that are not of his Sect; and who knows whether the Mufti of the *Turks* does

not pronounce a third Excommunication at the same time? 'Tis very odd to see Men condemn one another to everlasting Torments, and to usurp the most august Rites of the Divine Being in their several Turns, as if he had committed them to their Keeping. The Power of Excommunication is acquired among the *Muscovites* by bawling certain Words in the Ear; and such Priests as have not had those magical Terms blown into the auricular Canal, are incapable of damning any Person whatsoever.

Tho' the *Muscovites* are mortal Enemies to the *Romans*, they follow and imitate them in the Number of the subaltern Deities, whom they associate to the Supreme Being. 'Twas one *Basilides* who regulated the Rank and Dignity of those Demi-Gods, and their Images are placed in the Temple in the Order that he prescrib'd. Surely, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, this *Basilides* must have been a mighty vain Man, to presume to set up for Master of the Ceremonies of Heaven. No doubt thou would'st be apt to believe that he was an Emperor, or some famous Conqueror; so far from it, that he was but a Monk. Do but imagine what they would think in *China*, if a Lama, or a Bonze, was to give themselves such an Air as to offer to regulate the Place which the Tien ought to have given to *Confucius*, and to the Emperors who have wisely govern'd their State. That same *Basilides* order'd the Term *Exchange* to be employed in the Traffick of Saints, whether Male or Female, instead of *buying* and *selling*, as Terms too immodest. There's a Place at *Moscow* for the Truck and Barter of Images, and the Money given is in Proportion to the Size of the Figure that is wanted.

Every

Every *Muſcovite* has his particular Saint or Demi-God in his Houſe, whoſe Aſſiſtance he implores in the moſt difficult Affairs. Formerly they uſed to lend each other that domeſtick Saint who was moſt propitious to them; and if St. *James* did them no Good, they borrowed St. *Andrew* of their Neighbour. Heretofore there were little Images in great Credit in every Quarter, which were as much in the Faſhion, and as much courted, as a fine Harlot is at *Pekin*. Every one was curious to have a trial of the Image, and to ſee how he lik'd it; and were their own Image ever ſo good, and ever ſo powerful, they were not contented. The Paſſion of the *Muſcovites* for the Images in Vogue, was like the Folly of the *Chineſe*, who tho' they have a handſom Wife, can't forbear keeping a faſhionable Whore. But the late Czar prohibited this Swopping of Saints; he order'd that every one ſhould keep to his own, and what is worſe, enjoin'd the Prieſts and Fryars to let thoſe Images work no Miracle. Before this Prince, all that happened depended only on the Pleaſure and the Avarice of the Clergy; therefore now every Man keeps his Houſhold God at home, and if he lends it to his Neighbour, he does it very privately.

The principal and the moſt famous of all the Images that are in *Muſcovy* was painted about 1700 Years ago, by one *Luke*, a Diſciple of the Legiſlature of the Chriſtians; but ſurely he muſt have been a wretched Painter; for this Image is very ſadly done. An *Italian* whom I have ſeen here, told me in Confidence, that it was not painted by that *Luke*, and that he form'd his Judgment

ment of it by another Picture * which he had seen at *Rome* of this Painter, in a much better Taste and Design than the *Muscovite* Picture; but a *Frenchman* made a Jest of both Pictures, and assured me that the one was painted by a sorry *Greek* Dawber, and the other by a Scholar of *Pietro Perugini*; and that if a Man had ever so little Experience in Painting, he might easily distinguish the Stile. Be this as it will, *Basilides* has given the Preference to this Picture; for he assures that it had spoke, and said there was written round it, *My Grace and my Virtue be with this Image*. *Basilides* having promised the *Muscovites* that while they preserved this Image in *Moscow* the Emperor would always prosper, the *Muscovites* watch it as carefully as the *Trojans* did the Statue of *Pallas*.

There was no Credenda in Antiquity, how silly soever, but have been renewed in these latter Times; and the Moderns are altogether as superstitious as the Ancients. A Man would now be burnt at *Moscow*, if he should presume to say the least thing against the Worship that is paid to this Image. What would they not do therefore to the Man who, like another *Ulysses*, should undertake to rob them of this second *Palladium* †? I heard

* This Picture, pretended to be painted by St. *Luke*, is at *Rome* in the Church of the Painters.

† *Omnis spes Danaûm, & cœpti fiducia belli*
Palladis auxiliis semper stetit. Impius ex quo
Tydides, sed enim scelerumq; inventor Ulysses,
Fatale aggressi sacrato avellere templo
Palladium,

an

an old *Muſcovite* ſay, that all the Victories of the late Czar were due to this Image; and that on the Day that *Charles* XII. was defeated, its Face was redder than ordinary. Behold, here are other Miracles ſtolen from the ancient *Trojans*, * whoſe Statue of *Pallas* being carried into the Middle of the *Grecian* Camp, its very Eyes ſparkled with Fire, it ſhook its Lance and Buckler, and made ſeveral other Motions of Proweſs.

The Pleaſure I take, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, in comparing ancient Follies with modern ones, when

Palladium, cæſis ſummæ cuſtodibus arcis,
Corripuere ſacram Effigiem.

Virg. Æneid. Lib. ii.

The *Græcian* Hopes, and all th' Attempts they made
Were only founded on *Minerva*'s Aid.
But from the Time when impious *Diomede*,
And falſe *Ulyſſes* that inventive Head,
Her fatal Image from the Temple drew,
The ſleeping Guardians of the Caſtle ſlew,
Her Virgin Statue with their bloody Hands
Polluted, and prophan'd her holy Bands.

DRYDEN's *Tranſlation*.

* *Vix poſitum caſtris ſimulacrum, arſere coruſcæ*
Luminibus flammæ arrectis, ſalſuſq; per artus
Sudor iit, terq; ſolo (mirabile dictu)
Emicuit, palmamque ferens, haſtamq; trementem.

Id. ibid.

When firſt her fatal Image touch'd the Ground,
She ſternly caſt her glaring Eyes around,
That ſparkled as they roll'd, and ſeem'd to threat:
Her heav'nly Limbs diſtill'd a briny ſweat.
Thrice from the Ground ſhe leap'd, was ſeen to wield
Her brandiſh'd Lance and ſhake her horrid ſhield.

Ibid.

there's

there's a fair Opportunity for it, makes me good Amends for the Pains I have taken above a dozen Years in the Study of the *European* Sciences. I have infinite Obligations to our Friends the Missionaries; and in Consideration of the fine Learning which they have communicated to us, I forgive them some Absurdities and Chimæras with which they are infatuated. If the learned *Europeans* were as willing to improve by the Instructions of the learned *Chinese*, as we have improved by theirs, what would they not be? They would almost equal the cœlestial Intelligences in Knowledge; but so it is, that all Men are subject to the general Law of Nature, *viz.* always to retain some of their Prejudices. To believe that they have intirely quitted all, is one of the greatest and most hurtful. The wise Man must not fancy that he comes near Perfection, or that he ever can attain to it; such a Notion is the Wreck of human Wisdom; and all that a Man must propose to himself is to take care to be as little vicious as possible.

We are doom'd to Error from our Birth; the wisest is he that makes the least Mistakes, and the most virtuous he that commits the fewest Crimes; for the Knowledge and Virtues of Mankind are never without being obscured by some Clouds and Defects. When a *Chinese* takes to the *European* Virtues, he does not entirely leave the Vices of his Country; and the *European*, when he improves by the *Chinese* Learning, remains in certain Prejudices; therefore there will always be something of the Man in Man, let him strive ever so much to renew, as one may say, his own Nature.

'Tis time, Dear *Yn-Che-Chan*, to conclude my Letter. I propose to set out shortly from *Moscow* for

for *Peterſbourg*, where I ſhall have an Opportunity of knowing the modern *Muſcovites* of the late Czar's Creation, and ſhall be enabled to make a juſt Parallel between them, and thoſe I have hitherto ſeen, who retain as much of the Ancients as they have of the Moderns.

Farewel.

LETTER XL.

From TIAO *at* Moſcow *to* SIOEU TCHEOU *at* Paris.

Dear SIOEU TCHEOU,

HOW abſurd ſoever the Ceremonies are which the *Muſcovites* obſerve at the Birth of their Countrymen, thoſe they uſe at their Funerals are ſtill more ſo, being altogether as ridiculous as thoſe of the ancient *Grecians*, and every whit as ſuperſtitious as thoſe of the modern *Romans*.

When a Man dies at *Moſcow*, they let him lie three Days in his Bed, and they behave to him almoſt in the ſame Manner as if he was living. Nay they every now and then ſpeak to him, and his Children or Heirs aſk him ſeveral times with plaintive Voice why he does not ſpeak? what is the Cauſe of his Silence! The dead Man returning

ing no Anſwer, they put ſeveral other Queſtions to him; they deſire him to tell them what were the Reaſons that obliged him to lie down and die; they tell him that he had wherewithal to live as he pleaſed, and that he was beloved and carefully ſerved by his Family. To all this the dead Man anſwers not a Word. They repeat the ſame Queſtions over again; but the Deceaſed, as well he may, ſtill keeps Silence.

After three Days ſpent in this melancholy, doleful Manner, the dead Perſon is perfumed and carried to his Tomb, together with a great Pan full of Perfume. Probably the *Muſcovites* think this Ceremony to be as eſſential to the Repoſe of the Deceaſed, as the ancient *Ægyptians* thought it to embalm their Bodies; for the latter fancied, that after a certain Number of Ages there would be a great Revolution, when the Souls would return to the Bodies which they had formerly animated; but that when thoſe Bodies were reduced to Duſt, they were deprived of the Power of ever returning to the World. Perhaps too, the *Muſcovites* fancy, like the *Italians* and the *Spaniards*, that Perfumes have a ſecret Virtue, which takes off the Stain of Sins, and drives away evil Spirits. Theſe People take great Care to burn their Perfumes near their dead Bodies; and before they are laid in the Grave, a Prieſt goes ſeveral times round the Coffin, with an Incenſe-pot in his Hand.

Doſt thou not think it pleaſant, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, that ſome of the *European* Miſſionaries ſhould offer ſo much as to blame us for the Honours we pay to our deceaſed Kindred? Honours which are but plain Marks of the Friendſhip that we pay to their Memory: Do'ſt thou not think it pleaſant, I ſay,

I say, that those *Europeans* should make such a Clamour against those pious Ceremonies, at the same time that they pay divine Honours to their Dead, and that a Priest walks round a Corps, and perfumes it with as much Gravity as a Bonze does the Idol which is most in the Esteem of the Vulgar? I wonder not that several of our Countrymen, who at first suffer'd their Eyes to be dazzled with the Doctrine of the Missionaries, did abandon them afterwards, when they discover'd that the *Europeans* themselves practised what they condemned in other Nations. 'Tis very surprising that People who exclaim incessantly against the Superstition of the *Asiaticks*, and shew to Perfection how false and ridiculous they are, should be themselves the most superstitious of Mortals. A very authentick Instance this of the Force of Prejudice! But let us return, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, to the Funeral Ceremonies of the *Muscovites*.

On the Day that the Corps is carried to the Place where it is to be interr'd, the Kindred of the Deceased hire a Number of Mourners that walk before the Corps, making Cries, Lamentations and Howlings, very much like those unhappy Creatures that have been bit by certain venomous Insects, whose Sting disturbs their Reason. The Number of these Mourners is more or less according to the Riches of the Heirs, at whose Expence the Interments are made. When one considers the Custom of the *Muscovites* to pay People to weep for the Death of their Kindred, one would think that they themselves were insensible of it; and that being ashamed of their Hard-heartedness, they make others do what they ought themselves to do, for the sake of preserving some Decency;

Decency; but when we consider the Complaints, the Cries, the Grimaces, and all the external Marks of Sorrow which they shew upon this Occasion, 'tis plain that the Use of these Weepers who afflict themselves by Art must be attributed to an ancient Custom which they received from the *Grecians*. How foolish are Men, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, to make a Comedy of the most melancholy Subjects? What is it but turning the sorrowful and pious Ceremony of paying the best Devoirs to their Kindred into a ridiculous Farce, to employ Comedians upon such an Occasion, who weep because they are paid for it, but laugh inwardly at the Death of those whom they seem to lament, such Deaths being their Livelihood. In many Parts of *Asia* they are as silly as they are in *Muscovy*, where also they think they do Honour to the Dead, by Tears that are purchased.

When the People come to the Grave, where the Deceased is to be interr'd, a Pope, who in the Funeral Procession carried the Image of his Patron, places it on his Stomach, and there holds it, while both the Image and the Corps are again perfumed; which done, the Kindred go and in a respectful Manner kiss the Image, and beseech it to be kind to the Deceased, who had the Honour to bear its Name; and that it would be so good as to introduce the Person to Monsieur St. *Peter*. Surely the *Muscovites* look upon this Demi-God as the great Customer at the Port of Heaven, and undoubtedly they think he is very severe in the Collection of his Duties and the Functions of his Office. Thou wilt be able to judge of this by the Copy which I send thee of the Passport and Certificate which the Priest delivers

to

to the Deceaſed, and puts between the Thumb and Fore-finger of the Right-hand, before the Body is put into the Grave. I have copied it from one of thoſe which they always keep ready for the next Perſon that ſhall undertake a Journey to the other World.

" * We N. N. Biſhop and Prieſt do own and " certify in a publick Manner by theſe Preſents " that N---, the Bearer hereof, has lived with us " like a good and true *Greek* Chriſtian; and tho' " he has committed Sins, he has nevertheleſs con- " feſſed them, and received Abſolution, and the " Holy Supper, for the Forgiveneſs of thoſe very " Sins. He has alſo render'd true Worſhip to " God and his Saints, and he has faſted and pray'd " in a proper Manner, and has ever behaved well " towards me his Confeſſor; ſo that I have granted " him a full Pardon of his Sins. We have there- " fore given him this Certificate, to deliver it " to St. *Peter* and the other Saints, to the End " that by this Means he may, without any Mo- " leſtation, be introduced at the Gate of ever- " laſting Glory.

This authentick Paſſport is ſigned by the ſovereign Pontiff † of *Moſcow*, or by ſome particular Pontiff ‡. The *Muſcovites* put ſo great a Value upon it, that they would think the Perſon who is not furniſh'd with it, for ever ſhut out of the Kingdom of Heaven; therefore the Kindred of the Deceaſed are very careful to furniſh them with it. The Loſs of this Certificate would be deem'd

* The univerſal Religion of the *Muſcovites*. p. 141.
† The Patriarch.
‡ A Biſhop.

ſo

ſo heavy a Calamity, that tho' the *Muſcovites* are generally very covetous, yet the pooreſt of them when they die, leave Alms enough to pay for the ſpiritual Pancart; for the Popes don't part with any thing for nothing. They are as hard-hearted as *Charon*, and would leave the Souls of all the dead Poor who have not paid, wandring at the Gate of Paradiſe, as the infernal Ferryman of the *Greeks* did not carry over thoſe who had not been interr'd *. Let us judge, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, without any Paſſion betwixt the *Muſcovites* and the *Greeks*; let us forget that we are Moderns; let us diveſt ourſelves of Self-love, and then ſee whether Men are not as ſenſeleſs now as they were formerly. Two thouſand Years have not render'd them a jot the wiſer; our *Aſiaticks* are more ſu-

* *Cocyti ſtagna alta vides, Stygiamq; paludem:*
Dii cujus jurare timent et fallere Numen.
Hæc omnis quam cernis, inops, inhumataq; turba eſt:
Portitor ille Charon: hi quos vehit unda ſepulti,
Nec ripas datur horrendas, nec rauca fluenta
Tranſportare prius, quam ſedibus oſſa quierunt.
Virg. Æneid. Lib. vi. Ver. 323 &c.

Son of *Anchyſes*, Offspring of the Gods,
The Sibyl ſaid, you ſee the *Stygian* Floods,
The ſacred Streams which Heav'ns infernal State
Atteſts in Oaths and Fears to violate.
The Ghoſts rejected are th' unhappy Crew,
Depriv'd of Sepulchres and Fun'ral Due.
The Boatman *Charon*, thoſe of bury'd Hoſt,
He ferrys over to the farther Coaſt,
Nor dares his tranſport Veſſel croſs the Waves
With ſuch whoſe Bones are not compos'd in Graves.
Tranſlated by DRYDEN.

perſtitious

perſtitious, more ridiculous than their Forefathers; and as to the *Europeans*, be thyſelf the Judge, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, whether they are a whit the wiſer, and give thy Verdict as to the Cuſtom of the ancient *Grecians* and that of the *Muſcovites*. For my part, if I dare give my Opinion, I think the *Muſcovites* the moſt ſenſeleſs of the two. The Folly of the *Greeks* was more ſimple; they judged of the Avarice of their Gods by that of their Prieſts. I ſhould forgive the *Muſcovites* for thinking ſo too, their Popes give them but too much Reaſon for it, and I ſhould not be ſurpriſed if they gave a Ruble to a dead Man to pay for his Admiſſion into Paradiſe; but to give him a Scrap of Paper, ſigned by a Pope, a Man muſt be quite out of his Wits to imagine that a poor diminutive Mortal has a Prerogative to diſpatch a Paſſport for the cœleſtial Manſion, and that he ſhould regulate the Ranks and Honours of it.

When one attends to this fooliſh Ceremony, we need not wonder at all the other religious Cuſtoms of the *Muſcovites*, nor be ſurpriſed at their putting their Dead into their Graves with their Heads turned to the Eaſt. They imagine perhaps that the Souls come now and then to paſs ſome time in their old Caſe, and that they look upon Bodies in the Grave as ſo many Country-Houſes of the Spirits, and that therefore they expoſe the chief Apartments towards the Eaſt; for if they had not ſome ſuch frenzical Idea, what could be the Reaſon for obſerving this Cuſtom ſo religiouſly as they do; and what does it ſignify to a Soul whether the Body which it animates be interr'd with the Head turned to the Weſt or to the Eaſt? As ſoon as 'tis out of the Veſſel which

contain'd

contain'd it, or rather as ſoon as it has eſcaped out of the Priſon in which it was confined, it has nothing more to do with it; the very Matter which it vivify'd entirely changes its Form, and is even often re-animated by other Spirits which render it ſuſceptible of a Million of Forms or different Modifications. A Carcaſe is commonly changed into Worms, Inſects and Flies, and the Head is always the Part which is ſooneſt corrupted. What is the Eaſt therefore better than any other Quarter of the Heavens, and what Virtue has it over the Deceaſed, more than the Weſt, or the North?

The *Turks* are as ſilly as the *Muſcovites*; they bury their Dead with their Faces turned towards *Mecca*, becauſe they fancy that on the Day of the general Reſurrection, the evil Angels will ſeize all thoſe who, when they are brought to Life again, don't firſt caſt their Eyes towards the ſacred Moſque. In my Opinion, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, one of the greateſt Follies in Life is to make the Salvation of ſome Men depend on the Conduct of others. What Reaſon is there why a Perſon ſhall be puniſh'd for a Crime in which he had no Hand, if ſo be that 'tis a Crime to be interr'd with the Head towards the Weſt? By all the Rites of Juſtice we are to ſuppoſe that God will puniſh thoſe who inter, and not thoſe who are interr'd. This very Argument may be apply'd to ſeveral of the Opinions of the *Europeans*; Opinions almoſt as ſtrange as thoſe of the *Muſcovites* and *Perſians*. In three things out of four, the Non-obſervance of which in *Europe* expoſes to everlaſting Puniſhment, the moſt careful People can't be ſure they ſhall not fail. What an Abſurdity 'tis to overcharge Religion with an infinite Number of Ceremonies,

monies, and to make them so many fundamental Articles of Faith? Yet 'tis these *Europeans* that boast they are so wise and learned, who have acted so imprudently. To hear them condemn the superstitious Customs of the *Asiaticks*, one would take them for Philosophers above all Prejudices; but let us examine them in their Turn, we shall find them a hundred times weaker, and more inclined to Superstition than the People are for whom they have so great a Contempt.

'Tis Time for me, Dear *Sioeu Tcheou*, to think of putting an End to my Letter; yet I can't forbear adding one Word more concerning some of the *Muscovite* Customs. Their Mourning never lasts above six Weeks; during which Time they pay a Priest for muttering some Prayers every Day, for the Comfort and Repose of the Soul of the Deceased. This same Priest shuts himself up in a Box, which is for that Purpose only; and he takes care to moisten his Prayers by drinking every now and then a large Glass of Wine. Thou must not think this strange, since the *Muscovites*, in what State or Situation soever, always drink plentifully; for Sorrow never takes away their Relish of Wine and strong Liquors; so that as soon as they return from the Grave, all that have join'd in the Funeral Procession sit down to Table, and partake of a Feast, where they tipple to the Memory of the Deceased, make themselves drunk to his Honour and Glory; and they celebrate the Day, as the ancient *Romans* celebrated the Revels of *Bacchus*. The *Muscovites* pay Mourners to shed Tears at the Interment of their Kindred; but none of them ever think fit to give Money for

drinking to their Memory, that being a Duty which they always discharge themselves. If it was upon any other Occasion but this, I should own that it were better to drink than weep.

Farewel: I shall set out to-morrow for Petersbourg.

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